

# **Negotiating ‘Modernity’ on the Run**

Migration, Age Transition and  
‘Development’ in a Training Camp for  
Female Athletes in Arusha, Tanzania

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# Abstract

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Sports have recently been incorporated into international development agendas in a bid to ‘empower’ women and foster gender equality. Considered a masculine domain, sports are argued to empower women by challenging the status quo and their ‘traditional’ positions in societies.

This thesis examines the use of sport in an athletic training camp for female distance runners located in Arusha, Northern Tanzania. Like other similar camps throughout East Africa, this training camp provides financial support for athletes, recruited from isolated rural areas, to live and train full time in the city. The camp was founded and is run by a Tanzanian couple, known as Gwandu and Mama Gwandu, but it has recently begun receiving financial support from an American development organisation.

The director of this organisation, Karl, aims to empower the young women training in the camp by enabling them to use their sporting talent to further their education. This directly contradicts Gwandu and Mama Gwandu’s goals, however, and they strive to enable the girls to improve their lives by earning money from running. The girls themselves perceive running as a unique opportunity to migrate to Arusha and distance themselves from their natal villages. The idea of earning money from running is secondary, for the girls, to the aspiration of settling permanently in the city. Although running provides a common link between the goals of the development organisation, those of Gwandu and Mama Gwandu, and those of the female athletes themselves, the overlap between these goals is only partial. Pragmatic constraints in each case mean the goals remain always unattainable and partially unachieved, and are continually readjusted to fit changing constraints and perceptions of what is possible.

In discussing the different aspirations held by those involved in the training camp, this thesis highlights the multiple ways in which notions of ‘modernity’ can be understood and enacted. Modernity is a central theme in contemporary African anthropological literature, as is the notion of ‘multiple modernities’, often used to refer to the

culturally diverse interpretations of the meaning of modernity and subsequent efforts to 'become modern'. Using key authors including Ferguson (1999), Snyder (2002; 2005) and Schneider (1970), this thesis argues that, drawing on different influences to enact different cultural styles, the girls, Gwandu and Mama Gwandu imagine and perform 'modernity' in different ways.

Gwandu and Mama Gwandu are shown to draw on notions of *maendeleo* to construct a localist cultural style, which they attempt to enforce on the athletes in the camp. By contrast, the girls are argued to draw inspiration from what they perceive as the 'city' lifestyle maintained by Malkia – one of Tanzania's most successful female athletes – to construct a cosmopolitan cultural style they gradually gain performative competence in throughout their time in the camp. While both visions emphasise the importance of urbanisation, Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's localism condemns particular practices they conceive of as characteristic of "city life", including the value placed on commodities and modes of consumption that is central to the girls' cosmopolitanism. The clash between Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's goals and those of the girls is most pronounced at the beginning of their time in the camp. The girls' compliance with camp rules increases with their time spent in the camp, as their vision increasingly overlaps with that of Gwandu and Mama Gwandu. I argue that the clash between their goals is once again pronounced after the girls have left the camp, and attempt to perform the cosmopolitan cultural style in which they have increasingly gained competence during their time in the camp.

This discussion raises questions about the ways in which women can be 'empowered' through sports such as running. I argue that it is not running itself that empowers women like Malkia but, rather, the opportunity running affords them to acquire the material resources required, to perform the cosmopolitan style towards which they aspire.

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<sup>1</sup> All of the girls' names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

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# Table of Contents

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<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Table of Figures.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Glossary .....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Preface: Emerging Research Puzzles.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Team 100 .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Academic Debates and Scope of the Thesis.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<b>Chapter 2: Setting the Scene.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>Tanzania Relative to Kenya and Ethiopia.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>The Origins of Athletics in East Africa.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Gwandu and Maendeleo.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<b>Chapter 3: Running to Improve Lives.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<i>Nyaturu Women .....</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's Roles in the Camp.....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Athletes as Wealth.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>'Natural' Talent and Gender.....</i>	<i>51</i>
<b>Chapter 4: Running to Escape Village Life.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<i>Life in Team 100 as House Imaa .....</i>	<i>62</i>
<i>The Athletic Body.....</i>	<i>69</i>
<b>Chapter 5: The Transformation Process.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<i>Confidence.....</i>	<i>76</i>
<i>Hair and Clothing.....</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>'Legal' Names.....</i>	<i>86</i>
<i>Conflicting Aspirations.....</i>	<i>88</i>
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion .....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Reference List.....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Appendix 1.....</b>	<b>108</b>
<i>Map of the Mbulu and Karatu Districts, Arusha Region, Tanzania .....</i>	<i>108</i>
<b>Appendix 2.....</b>	<b>109</b>
<i>Map Showing Singida Region in Tanzania.....</i>	<i>109</i>

<i>Map of Singida Region, Tanzania.....</i>	<i>110</i>
<b>Appendix 3.....</b>	<b>111</b>
<i>Diagram Showing Current Layout of Team 100 Camp .....</i>	<i>111</i>
<b>Appendix 4.....</b>	<b>113</b>
<i>Table of Statistics for Team 100 Athletes.....</i>	<i>113</i>
<b>Appendix 5.....</b>	<b>114</b>
<i>Map of Tanzania Showing Highways .....</i>	<i>114</i>
<b>Appendix 6.....</b>	<b>115</b>
<i>Map of Arusha .....</i>	<i>115</i>

# Table of Figures

---

<b>Figure 1:</b> Map of Tanzania showing location of Arusha and Moshi .....	8
<b>Figure 2:</b> The dry sand and rocky soils of Kinyetto village, Singida region .....	9
<b>Figure 3:</b> One of the athletes' rooms in the camp. ....	11
<b>Figure 4:</b> Gwandu, Mama Gwandu and their children.....	12
<b>Figure 5:</b> A woman in Lighwa village, rural Singida, cooking with a <i>chungu</i> clay pot.....	19
<b>Figure 6:</b> Emily cooking beans and maize for the athletes' lunch. ....	38
<b>Figure 7:</b> School children running in a race in Lighwa village, rural Singida. ....	43
<b>Figure 8:</b> Vehicles owned by some of Tanzania's most successful male athletes. ....	50
<b>Figure 9:</b> Male athletes aggressively competing against each other to achieve the fastest time during a training exercise at the Arusha stadium.....	53
<b>Figure 10:</b> One of the local forms of public transport Emily and I employed on our trip from Arusha to Bassodawish. ....	58
<b>Figure 11:</b> A hut in Bassodawish village.....	59
<b>Figure 12:</b> Women performing dances and songs formerly used in Nyaturu festivals. ....	61
<b>Figure 13:</b> Girls training in Ilboru.....	70
<b>Figure 14:</b> Niara looking "strong like a man".....	72
<b>Figure 15:</b> Reheema posing with mobile phone.....	72
<b>Figure 16:</b> Gwandu and Mama Gwandu standing outside their living quarters in the camp..	77
<b>Figure 17:</b> Malkia wearing one of the many gowns she owned.....	80
<b>Figure 18:</b> A young girl carrying an infant in a <i>kanga</i> .....	82
<b>Figure 19:</b> Evelyn (left) and Niara (right) with their new dresses for Mombassa.....	83
<b>Figure 20:</b> Evelyn (left) and Niara (middle) with their new hairstyles.....	85
<b>Figure 21:</b> Gwandu and Mama Gwandu with Team 100 athletes at the camp. ....	97



# List of Tables

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<b>Table 1:</b> Tables showing results from the 2008 and 2007 World Cross-Country Championship events. ....	<b>26</b>
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# List of Abbreviations

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AT	Athletics Tanzania
CHADEMA	Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Party for Democracy and Progress)
IAAF	International Association of Athletics Federation
ICEARS	International Centres for East African Running Science
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
SPC	South Plains College
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States (of America)

# Glossary

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<b>Chungu</b> (noun)	A large, rounded, earthenware cooking-pot, predominantly used in rural areas of Tanzania.
<b>Dala dala</b> (noun)	A Toyota ‘Hiace’ model van used to carry passengers along fixed routes within urban centres. Although commonly functioning as inner-city bus services in major Tanzanian cities, <i>dala dalas</i> also travel north along the highway from Arusha, linking nearby rural districts such as Karatu and Mbulu.
<b>Hamna</b> (inflected verb)	Is nothing, is empty
<b>Jembe</b> (noun)	Gardening hoe
<b>Kanga</b> (noun)	Bright, colourfully printed cloth worn by women. <i>Kanga</i> are often worn as a pair, layered over skirts, pants, shoulders or used as a head covering. <i>Kanga</i> are also used for sleeping in and for carrying babies.
<b>Maendeleo</b> (plural noun)	Development or progress. From the verb <i>endelea</i> meaning to develop, continue, proceed, or progress. Singular: <i>endeleo</i>
<b>Mwalimu</b> (noun)	Teacher or schoolteacher
<b>Mzee</b> (noun)	Literally meaning respected elder or ancestor, the term <i>mzee</i> is also commonly used as a term of respect for a dignified man.
<b>Mzungu</b> (noun)	European, American or ‘White’ person. Plural: <i>wazungu</i>
<b>Sufuria</b> (noun)	Flat metallic pan used for cooking

<b>Ugali</b> ( <i>noun</i> )	A Stiff porridge made of maize meal and water, eaten throughout East Africa.
<b>Ujamaa</b> ( <i>noun</i> )	A term referring to kinship, community or extended family ties. Politically, the term <i>ujamaa</i> was used to refer to the socialist policies of Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, and the particular form of communal living he conceived of as ‘traditionally African’.
<b>Utamaduni</b> ( <i>noun</i> )	Culture or ‘tradition’
<b>Zawadi</b> ( <i>noun</i> )	Gift

## **Preface:**

# **Emerging Research Puzzles**

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This thesis is based on fieldwork carried out from March to June of 2007 in an athletic training camp for female distance runners located in Arusha, northern Tanzania. Known as ‘Team 100’, the camp was founded by Zacharia Gwandu<sup>2</sup>, who now coaches all the athletes living onsite. Team 100 is partially funded by sponsorship from a US-based non-profit organisation founded and directed by Karl Keirstead<sup>3</sup>, named ‘A Running Start’. I was first able to make contact with Gwandu by e-mailing Karl and, consequently, my relationship with Team 100 was initially framed by its relationship with A Running Start.

The A Running Start organisation is committed to using sport as a tool for international ‘development’. To this end, it also sponsors a number of other athletic training camps throughout East Africa, a region Karl describes as “impoverished, yet... home to the world’s greatest store of running talent” (Keirstead, 2008). On its website, A Running Start lists three specific development goals it aims to achieve using the sport of running. These are; to enable high school graduates to obtain athletic scholarships to American universities; to use sporting programmes in schools to encourage children to complete primary and secondary education; and to enable talented East African runners to become professional athletes (Keirstead, 2008).

The use of sport as a tool in international development is a recent but growing trend. Large-scale organisations including the United Nations (UN)<sup>4</sup> and the United Nations

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<sup>2</sup> Referred to as ‘Zach’ by Karl, Zacharia Gwandu introduced himself to me as ‘Gwandu’, and this is thus the way he is referred to hereafter.

<sup>3</sup> Hereafter referred to as Karl.

<sup>4</sup> The UN’s recent commitment to using sport in ‘development’ is illustrated in its inaugural naming of a ‘Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace’ in 2001, and its naming of 2005 as the ‘International Year of Sport and Physical Education’.

Children's Fund (UNICEF) have begun systematically incorporating sport into global development agendas in recent years (UN & SDC, 2006; UNICEF, 2004). Typically a male-dominated domain, sport has been considered particularly effective for promoting gender equality (Bloom & Herrman, 2004; Braid, 2003; Burnett, 2001: 42; Meier, 2005; Saavedra, 2007; Schontz, 2002; Whalen, 2008; UN, 2005) and helping women "claim their place in society" (UNICEF, 2004). Development programmes and initiatives using sport have, thus, typically been targeted at women, reflecting the UN's long-term goal of 'empowering' women in various ways<sup>5</sup>.

In Tanzania, participation in sports at all levels has historically been male dominated, and Tanzanian women continue to face a number of institutional and socio-cultural barriers preventing their participation in sport to the same level as men (Fasting & Massao, 2002: 2; Massao & Fasting, 2003: 119, 125; McHenry, 1980; Shehu, 1999: 2). Prior to my arrival in Arusha, Karl expressed that his decision to help fund Team 100 had been strongly influenced by the fact that it was the only athletic training camp in the country to focus solely on female runners. Karl aspired to "empower" the young women of Team 100 by giving them a "better chance in life" (from personal email, 16.04.07), and he hoped to use the American athletic scholarship programme as the means of achieving this.

As for participation in sport in Tanzania, the American athletic scholarship programme is also male dominated (Mordkoff, 2003). Karl thus saw Team 100 as the "perfect opportunity" to utilise available scholarship funding in a way that benefited both Tanzanian athletes as well as American university coaches (Keirstead, 2008). Using his coaching skills to train and prepare the girls, Karl urged Gwandu to recruit only secondary educated athletes already eligible to apply for university education in the US, or to provide means for athletes educated only to the primary school level to continue secondary studies in Arusha.

In Karl's eyes, Gwandu seemed an ideal prospect for helping Tanzanian athletes achieve athletic scholarships to American universities, because he was the only coach

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<sup>5</sup> As outlined in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the UN Millennium Development Goals, adopted in the year 2000 (Willis, 2005).

in Arusha to have, himself, been awarded an athletic scholarship. This further influenced Karl's decision to sponsor Gwandu and Team 100 in preference to the numerous other coaches working in Arusha. Gwandu maintains connections of his own with athletic coaches in American universities and, like Karl, conceives of running as an opportunity to improve the girls' lives. Prior to my arrival in Arusha, Gwandu indicated to me in e-mails that he felt all the girls were "better off" in the camp than they would be had they remained in the rural villages in which they were born (from personal e-mail, 23.01.07).

Informed by my communication with Karl and Gwandu prior to my arrival in Tanzania, this project was initially conceptualised as being framed around questions of how, exactly, running and American university education worked to empower the girls, in line with development goals defined by the UN (UN, 2005). I was particularly interested in the idea that empowering women was necessary in order for them to benefit from the favourable changes of development (Gustavo, 1992: 10), and wanted to explore the idea of African female athletes as 'pioneers' who were "overcoming the odds" by participating in running (Schontz, 2002).

I was interested to hear cases of girls who had succeeded, as well of girls who had failed in their application for scholarship, and to learn what happened to girls once they had completed university education, left the camp, or once they had retired from running. As I settled into life at the Team 100 camp, however, I realised that, although Gwandu and Karl appeared to share similar ideas of development and improving the girls' lives through running, their visions were, in fact, different in many ways.

The first signs of this difference were manifested immediately upon my arrival when it became apparent that none of the girls were fluent enough in English for me to have lengthy conversations with them without assistance. Despite Karl's assurances to me in his e-mails that I would not require an interpreter to communicate with them in English, I later learnt that the majority of the girls in the camp were of Nyaturu descent, and that the fact they had learnt to speak Swahili<sup>6</sup> fluently was in itself an achievement. Many of the girls' families, still living in the rural areas from which

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<sup>6</sup> The official national language of Tanzania.

they were recruited, spoke only Nyaturu and had little use for Swahili, given they seldom travelled outside of their villages.

Owing to his American university education, however, Gwandu spoke excellent English, and was keen to practice it with me as he seldom had other opportunities to do so. Rather than focussing my work on the girls from the beginning, therefore, many of my initial insights into camp life were based on in depth discussions I had with Gwandu about the history of Team 100, his own running career, and his aspirations for the camp and the girls. Even after I found an assistant to facilitate communication between the girls and me, these discussions continued and, initiated by Gwandu himself, became an almost daily occurrence, held during the girls' training sessions or while they rested in the afternoons. Gwandu also initiated most of the topics of our conversations and directed much of the conversation flow.

Early into my fieldwork the unexpected language complication between the girls and me placed me in the unique position of having Gwandu regularly reflecting on various aspects of his own life and work. I soon became more intrigued by things that emerged from Gwandu's reflections and views that appeared to contradict those of Karl and A Running Start, than with my original questions of how running functioned to empower the girls. For example, I was curious as to why Gwandu did not seem to consider it important to improve the girls' English, and why, despite the apparent logic of Karl's plan to enable the girls to gain university athletic scholarships, Gwandu continued to recruit girls with only primary education, without providing a means for them to continue secondary education in Arusha. He listed financial constraints as one of the main reasons for not doing so, despite the fact that A Running Start supports a number of Kenyan camps with both training and educational facilities for athletes.

Another fundamental characteristic of Team 100 that I found deeply puzzling was the fact that it housed only female athletes. While, for Karl, a female-only athletic camp signalled unique opportunities for development through women's empowerment, recruiting females appeared significantly more complicated for Gwandu than did recruiting males. Until recently, Gwandu explained, Team 100 had housed only male athletes who, like him, were of Iraqw descent. Running is popular among the Iraqw,



who are widely reputed throughout Tanzania as the country's greatest runners. Since 1998, however, Gwandu gradually replaced male athletes with females until the camp housed only women, as it does now. Today, the majority of athletes living in Team 100 are of Nyaturu descent, recruited from the remote and difficult to access<sup>7</sup> Singida region of north-central Tanzania.

Given the over-representation of male compared to female runners in Tanzania, and the popularity of running among the Iraqw compared to the Nyaturu, recruiting Iraqw male athletes is significantly more straightforward than recruiting Nyaturu females. Likewise, because education at all levels is more common for men than for women in Tanzania – particularly secondary education<sup>8</sup> – Karl's idea to recruit secondary educated female athletes, or talented female runners who also have achieved high academic results, is very difficult to accomplish. I wondered why, if Gwandu was unwilling or unable to recruit the educated female athletes Karl aspired to help, he had shifted away from the apparently simpler process of recruiting men.

Karl was aware none of the athletes currently living in Team 100 were eligible to apply for athletic scholarships. In e-mails I received from him during my fieldwork, however, this nevertheless appeared to be a source of frustration for him, and he described himself as having had to lower his expectations and aspirations for Team 100 athletes. Although the A Running Start website listed three goals for development through sport (Keirstead, 2008), Karl argued that the only way to create long-term development from running was through education, preferably American university education. Karl described the other two goals – of using sports to encourage children to complete primary and secondary education, and of enabling talented runners to become professional athletes – as something he had “to be content with” in light of the obstacles he faced (from personal email, 16.04.07).

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<sup>7</sup> This is described in more detail in subsequent chapters.

<sup>8</sup> Reliable, up-to-date information on secondary education in Tanzania is scarce (UNICEF, 2007), however, females have been shown to have made up 32% of total secondary school enrolments between the years 1995 and 1999 (Tanzania Ministry of Education, 2001), while the overall female to male adult literacy ratio in Tanzania was estimated at 8:10 in 2006 (UNESCO, 2006).

Given Karl's despondence towards the idea of helping Team 100 athletes become professional athletes, I reasoned that Gwandu was likely to be receiving a similarly limited amount of funding from A Running Start for coaching uneducated girls as he would be for coaching boys – whether educated or not. I wondered why Gwandu appeared not to prioritise education as part of the process of improving the girls' lives and how it was that, without long-term, measurable improvements such as educational attainment, Gwandu nevertheless considered the girls to be "better off" in the camp than in their natal villages.

Although diverging from my original point of focus, these questions began to frame my fieldwork, in the way I interpreted Gwandu's observations as well as in those I made myself. My decision to change focus was not arbitrary, but was made deliberately as result of the unexpected situation in which I found myself (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 37; Obel, 2004: 418; Wolf, 1992: 11). What emerged from this is an account of life in the camp as a process of transition and identity change, which Gwandu describes as revolving around improving the girls' lives by enabling them to earn money from running, and which the girls themselves conceive of in terms of beginning a new life in the city as urban women. Consistent with contemporary Africanist debates in anthropology, this thesis revolves around themes of 'modernity' and the multiple ways in which individuals aspire to become modern. The transition from childhood to adulthood emerges as a significant theme throughout this discussion, also reflecting an important theme in current East African ethnography, suggesting that age grade transition rites are reinterpreted through notions of modernity.

# Chapter 1:

## Introduction

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Gwandu was the first person in the Team 100 camp with whom I had contact and, given his fluency in English, the first person in the camp with whom I built a relationship upon my arrival in Arusha. Reflecting the important role he played in the early days of my fieldwork, this chapter begins with a brief outline of Gwandu's life and running career, as well as that of his wife, with whom he founded the Team 100 camp. The chapter then provides a background description of the Team 100 camp and its relationship with the only other athletic training camp located in Arusha, before outlining the anthropological debates on 'modernity' and the concept of 'multiple modernities' around which this thesis is framed.

Gwandu was born in 1969 in the remote Iraqw homeland of *Mama Issara*<sup>9</sup>, in the mountainous Arusha<sup>10</sup> region of northern Tanzania. Built on the highlands overlooking the small town of Mbulu, the village expands over rolling hills, and Gwandu recalls having to run long distances to and from school. Running was also a popular activity outside of school time in *Mama Issara* where, inspired by the widely celebrated careers of elite Iraqw athletes such as Filbert Bayi<sup>11</sup> and Gidamis Shahanga<sup>12</sup>, athletics enthusiasts regularly organised races for local school children. Fit from his daily school runs, Gwandu portrayed himself as an eager and skilful competitor in such races.

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<sup>9</sup> *Mama Issara* is the Swahili name given to the area thought to have been first colonised by Iraqw, the place they now call their homeland. In Iraqw, *Mama Issara* is referred to as *Irqwa Da'aw*. See Snyder, 2005 pages 17-31 for a more detailed description of *Mama Issara*.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 1 for a map of the Arusha region of North-central Tanzania.

<sup>11</sup> Winner of the 1500 metres event at the 1974 Commonwealth Games, in a time that set a new world record for this distance. Also set a new world record for the mile in 1975.

<sup>12</sup> Winner of the 1978 Commonwealth Games marathon, the 1984 Rotterdam Marathon and the 1989 Berlin Marathon. Also won the 10,000 metres event at the 1982 Commonwealth Games.

In 1980, at the age of 11, Gwandu finished primary school and left the Mbulu district to begin secondary education in Moshi, a large town at approximately one hour's drive East of Arusha (see Figure 1). Between 1980 and 1984, Gwandu continued to train and race as often as his studies allowed, again achieving high results in many local races. During this period, Gwandu was invited to work as a pacemaker in various races throughout Sweden and Italy and, in 1984, he was selected to represent Tanzania at the Los Angeles Olympic Games. In 1985, after having passed his final secondary school exams with high grades, he was awarded an athletic scholarship to the South Plains College (SPC) in Levelland, Texas. Gwandu studied at SPC for three years before returning to Tanzania in 1988. Between 1988 and 1990 he again travelled between Africa and Europe to work as a pacemaker, before finally retiring in 1990.



**Figure 1:** Map of Tanzania showing location of Arusha and Moshi  
(Source: *Compassion International*, 2008)

By this time, Gwandu was married to another runner named Marcelina, whom he had met on the 1984 Tanzanian Olympic team. Now known as Mama Gwandu<sup>13</sup>, Marcelina is of Nyaturu descent, and was born in 1964 in the village of Kinyetto in

<sup>13</sup> Meaning “mother of Gwandu”. In Tanzania, it is customary for a woman to be addressed in this manner after the birth of her first-born child. Mama Gwandu is referred to as such because she and Gwandu also named their first-born ‘Gwandu’.

the Singida region of north-central Tanzania<sup>14</sup>. In contrast to the cool, moist climate and lush, green landscape of *Mama Issara*, the Singida region is semi-arid and characterised by rocky, sandy, or clay soils of low fertility (see Figure 2). Mama Gwandu remembers life in the village as “very hard”, and explains children were often kept home from school because their help was needed for work around the home. Mama Gwandu found school a welcome distraction from work, but recalls having to run the long distance between school and home in order to complete her chores by nightfall.



**Figure 2:** The dry sand and rocky soils of Kinyetto village, Singida region  
(Source: author's collection)

Running was not as popular in Kinyetto as it was among the Iraqw living in *Mama Issara*, and Mama Gwandu did not have the same opportunities to compete in organised races as had Gwandu. Mama Gwandu jokes that because she was a hungry child, however, she was willing to run the long distance home to help prepare the midday meal, before eating rapidly and running back to school for afternoon classes. Mama Gwandu became known throughout Kinyetto for her appetite as well as her running and, having finished primary school in 1979, decided to compete in the regional athletics championship event held in nearby Singida town, in the hopes of

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<sup>14</sup> See Appendix 2 for maps of the Singida region of North-central Tanzania.

having her name printed in the local newspaper and becoming well-known throughout the region.

According to Gwandu, Mama Gwandu won every event she entered in the regional competition, despite running without shoes and against more experienced athletes. Mama Gwandu won the 800 metres event in a time fast enough to attract the attention of Athletics Tanzania (AT), the Tanzanian national athletics federation, and, soon after, she received invitations to work as a pacemaker in races throughout Europe. Between 1979 and 1984, Mama Gwandu travelled between Tanzania and Europe to race and, following the 1984 Olympics, she married Gwandu and retired from running. After his retirement in the early 1990s, Gwandu and Mama Gwandu together began laying the foundations for the creation of the Team 100 athletic training camp.

### **Team 100**

Arusha was chosen as the location for the camp because, by the 1990s, athletes from northern rural districts such as Mbulu and Singida had begun congregating in the city. Arusha was also home to one of the only stadiums in the north of the country with an officially measured running track. The name Team 100 was chosen to reflect Gwandu's desire for his athletes to "work together like a team", and because he saw 100 as "the perfect score" and thought this would inspire his athletes to work hard. The physical infrastructure of Team 100, as it stands today<sup>15</sup>, evolved gradually as the amount of athletes recruited for the camp increased over time and more room was needed to house them all. By 1998, Team 100 was full to capacity, housing 20 athletes, with no surrounding land available to extend the premises.

These athletes were recruited mostly from Mbulu, but also surrounding Babati and Karatu, were all male, and were all Iraqw. Today the camp houses 14 female athletes, 13 of whom are Nyaturu and one who is Iraqw. At the time of my visit, all athletes were aged between 13 and 21 years<sup>16</sup> and shared four sets of bunk beds in 3 rooms (see Figure 3). I shared a room with two athletes, but slept in my own bed. Gwandu

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix 3 for a diagram showing the current layout of the camp.

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix 4 for a table of statistics of Team 100 athletes, including their age at the time of my stay, village from which they were recruited, the primary school they attended, and the year in which they arrived in Team 100.

also coaches several transient athletes who do not live within the camp but who occasionally participate in his training sessions. He does not provide these athletes with accommodation or food, but typically attempts to associate them with Team 100 if they produce high results, in order to raise the profile of the camp.



**Figure 3:** One of the athletes' rooms in the camp.  
The beds in this room were shared by seven girls.  
(Source: author's collection)

The rooms of the camp not currently used by athletes are rented out to families living in Arusha, but unrelated to Team 100. Mama Gwandu and Gwandu's four children also live in the camp, as well as five children they have adopted from extended family (see Figure 4). The camp is, therefore, still full to capacity, and the athletes' training and daily chores are broken up by times of play and interaction with the neighbours' young children and 'housegirls'<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> 'Housegirl' is a term used to describe young, generally unmarried women living with – but not necessarily related to – a family, whose job is to help with household chores such as cooking, cleaning, laundry and childcare. This work is done in exchange for a small wage or for free food and board. Many of the 'housegirls' I met in Arusha were using the job as a means to living in the city, although their heavy workloads and modest wages prohibited them from experiencing much of life outside of the households in which they worked, or from putting money aside in savings to secure long-term settlement in Arusha.

One other formal training camp existed in Arusha when Team 100 was built, located in the neighbourhood of Ilboru where both camps are still found today. Run by Max Iraghe, one of Gwandu's former athletic rivals, the camp was known as 'Team Max' in its early days, but has since changed its name to the Tanzania Sports Academy. While the athlete population in Arusha has grown since the early 1990s and it is now commonplace for coaches to house athletes in their private homes, the Tanzania Sports Academy and Team 100 are, nevertheless, the only two formal athletic training camps in Arusha. The Tanzania Sports Academy encompasses a secondary school in which all its athletes are enrolled, and structures training sessions to fit around the school day. The camp houses a total of 28 male and female student-athletes, the majority of whom are Iraqw.



**Figure 4:** Gwandu, Mama Gwandu and their children.  
(Source: author's collection)

Ilboru – dubbed 'Ilboru village' by locals – is ideally suited to cross-country running and, as such, is home to a large proportion of the many coaches and athletes living in Arusha. Located on the edge of Arusha's urban sprawl approximately three kilometres north of the city centre, Ilboru is part of Arusha in geographical terms. However, the countless fruit stalls, meat shops, general stores, bars, hair salons and clothes shops



that line its narrow dirt roads mean it could function almost autonomously from the rest of the city.

Housing an uncommon mix of expatriate and Tanzanian homes, around half of Ilboru consists of rural-style dwellings without electricity or plumbing, but containing sizeable plots of cultivated land. Ilboru also counts at least two large churches and several schools, as well as the luxurious Ilboru Safari Lodge, popular among American tourists. Winding gradually uphill towards Mount Meru in the distance, the Ilboru main road is unsealed and deeply potholed, crosscut by innumerable dirt trails and narrow paths. These gradually give way to sparsely populated farmland and cultivated crops, interspersed with woodland, streams, and the larger Ilboru River.

For those familiar with Ilboru's maze of dirt trails and shortcuts, only a short walk separates Team 100 from the Tanzania Sports Academy. In terms of their training philosophies and ideologies, however, the distance between the two camps is greater. At the time of my fieldwork, the two camps did not compete for resources in the sense that their different foci – one on secondary education and the other on female athletes – meant they received sponsorship from different, unrelated sources. Despite this, however, Mama Gwandu and Gwandu strongly disliked Max Iraghe, often criticising the way in which the Tanzania Sports Academy was organised and managed, and frequently accusing Max of being personally corrupt and dishonest.

Although the tension between the camps made it difficult for me to interact with members of the Tanzania Sports Academy, I was nevertheless able to meet briefly with the camp's secondary school principal and one of their coaches. The majority of the information I gathered on Max Iraghe and his camp thus came from comments made by Gwandu and Mama Gwandu, rather than from my own, first hand, observations. Mama Gwandu and Gwandu's dislike for Max Iraghe began around the time the camp changed its name from Team Max to the Tanzania Sport Academy. This name change accompanied the construction of the camp's secondary school which, according to the school principal, was built in order to differentiate the camp from Team 100 and make it unique in Arusha.

According to Gwandu and Mama Gwandu, however, the school's construction reflected Max Iraghe's selfishness and greed for money. Gwandu argued that the school attracted greater sponsorship funding but did not benefit the athletes, who were unable to study and train at the intensity required to achieve high results in both areas. Gwandu thus implied Max exploited the young athletes for his own financial gains, and feared that they would soon become exhausted from the strain. Gwandu remembered his own period of intense study and training in America as the hardest time of his life, and the fear of exhausting his own athletes was another reason he did not comply with Karl's wish to make Team 100 into a scholarship training club.

In response to the pressure he received from Karl to recruit educated female athletes, Gwandu emphasised that Team 100 had begun without sponsorship from 'A Running Start', as Karl had only come into contact with the camp in 2004. As such, Gwandu argued he should be allowed to manage Team 100 independently, in line with his original goals for the camp, which were to "help Tanzania" by improving individual athletes' lives through running. Mama Gwandu – whom Gwandu described as having been "saved" and "born again" as a Christian – argued that, in helping to improve lives, Team 100 was "doing God's work".

To effectively improve Team 100 athletes' lives, Gwandu and Mama Gwandu felt they, themselves, needed to be selfless and lead modest lives. Selflessness was important to ensure they always strove to do what most benefited the camp, rather than what benefited themselves personally, and modesty was necessary because all of Mama Gwandu and Gwandu's personal expenses came from money that could be spent on the camp and on the athletes. Gwandu thus emphasised that anything beyond basic needs such as food, water and a safe, clean shelter were luxuries and a misuse of money. The camp had one tap outdoors in the courtyard from which water for washing, cooking and cleaning was taken but, unlike the Tanzania Sports Academy, it did not have electricity, and Gwandu did not own a car. The girls thus walked the three kilometres into town for occasional training sessions held in the Arusha stadium.

Gwandu strongly approved of the girls' walking rather than relying on vehicles for transport and, like the camp's lack of electricity, explained this indicated they, too, led modest lives. By contrast – led by the negative example provided by Max Iraghe's

selfishness and greed, and the unnecessary luxuries his camp already contained – Gwandu speculated Tanzania Sports Academy athletes lacked discipline and would gradually become increasingly demanding:

*“Over there [at the Tanzania Sports Academy] they have television! ... You know, I went to a training camp in Kenya and there it was even worse! All the athletes had television in their rooms because they asked, and so they got it... of course then they did not rest, they were up in the night watching television! ... I think it will be the same at Max’s soon”*

The comparison Gwandu makes between the Tanzania Sports Academy and Kenyan camps reflects negative stereotypes about Kenyans that are widely held by Tanzanians. I was told of Kenyans’ inherent selfishness and greed on numerous occasions throughout my time in Arusha, and Katherine Snyder, who has worked among the Iraqw in *Mama Issara* since the late 1980s, also notes similar views. Snyder quotes one informant asserting Kenyans “care about money more than people”, for example, an attitude she suggests is attributed to Kenya’s capitalist economy (2005: 10). In Tanzania, capitalism is seen as a marker of contemporary ‘Western’ or ‘Euro-American’ culture whose negative aspects, like those of other features associated with ‘modern’ or ‘Western’ life, are surrounded by considerable debate throughout the country. These debates have become increasingly salient over recent years, Snyder argues, as Tanzania’s relatively recent embrace of a capitalist economy has led more Tanzanians to fear their country will “end up like Kenya” (2005: 10).

### **Academic Debates and Scope of the Thesis**

For Gwandu, the fear of becoming ‘like Kenya’ was echoed in his criticisms of the Tanzania Sports Academy and the selfishness and greed he saw in Max Iraghe. In his refusal to travel by car and install electricity and televisions in the Team 100 camp, Gwandu rejected ‘modern’ aspects of ‘Western’ culture, in the same way as he dismissed Western university education as the means by which to improve the girls’ lives. Despite his own time studying in SPC, Gwandu’s rejections thus echo fears many Tanzanians share about modernity and the process of becoming modern, according to Snyder.

Modernity is a central theme in contemporary African anthropological literature, as is the notion of “multiple modernities” (Englund & Leach, 2000: 225) – often used to refer to the culturally diverse interpretations of the meaning of modernity and subsequent efforts to become modern. In his seminal ethnography of the Zambian Copperbelt, Ferguson describes modernity as a “performative competence” portrayed by different cultural styles (1999: 96). Zambians living in the Copperbelt enact modernity by drawing on both “cosmopolitan” and “localist” cultural styles in different social contexts, according to Ferguson (1999: 86), enabling them to establish particular alliances and join imagined communities and social networks (1999: 97).

Ferguson acknowledges cosmopolitan styles throughout Africa are dominated by Western and Western-derived cultural forms, but argues that they are not limited to this, however (Ferguson, 1999: 108; 2005). Both are styles in their own right, and stylistic competence in either requires significant investment in time and resources (Ferguson, 1999: 100). Similarly, although cosmopolitanism is also often associated with urbanism – reflecting the higher concentration of Western goods in African urban centres than in rural areas – Ferguson argues both cosmopolitanism and localism coexist within single communities (1999: 97). The differences between Team 100 and the Tanzania Sports Academy illustrate this idea, in that the criticisms Gwandu and Mama Gwandu have of Max Iraghe can be seen to stem from differences in the cultural styles each enacts.

For Ferguson, the idea of multiple modernities relates not only to cross-cultural differences, but also to differences between individuals of a same group, because not all Zambian urbanites enact cosmopolitan style all the time, and not all rural-dwellers are localists (1999: 97). This is discussed in more detail in chapter four, where the idea that cultural styles differentiate individuals of the same group is used to help explain tensions that exist in the camp between the girls and Gwandu and Mama Gwandu.

The relationship Ferguson points to between cosmopolitanism and urbanism highlights another prominent theme in African anthropology, relating to perceived differences in the experience of modernity between rural and urban communities throughout Africa (Bender, 2007: 267; Cinar, 2007: 151; Deutsch et al., 2002: 4;

Englund, 2002; Ferguson, 1999: 33; Magubane, 1973). Although the relationship between many African cities and villages is characterised by a constant flow of ideas, goods and persons, meaning the two are complementary rather than opposed, authors such as Van Binsbergen (1999: 284) have argued for the ethnographic relevance of a rural/urban dichotomy insofar as it informs African actors' lives and experiences.

Also working in Zambia, Van Binsbergen suggests urban-dwellers use an imagined "virtual village" – in which community is based on an "un-eroded kinship system, symbolism, ritual and cosmology" – to make sense of new community structures found in the city (Van Binsbergen, 1999: 283-5). A dichotomy between rural and urban community structures is central to Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's management of the Team 100 camp, as well as to the aspirations the athletes themselves hold for their lives and running careers. This is discussed further in chapter four.

Snyder (2002) finds that a rural/urban dichotomy is also relevant in *Mama Issara*, and argues that modern forms of community found in the city are part of the reason Iraqw youth are increasingly drawn to urban life. Snyder describes individuals in rural Iraqw communities as being enmeshed in a "web of obligation and reciprocity" related to the ownership and exchange of goods and resources (Snyder, 2002: 167). Snyder (2002) and Rekdal (1996) explain that, in the past, the exchange of livestock and beer played important roles in transactions such as marriage that formed, maintained and reasserted relationships between groups and individuals in Iraqw communities. These exchange networks continue to exist, but have been influenced by the introduction of modern commodities such as commercial beer and European breeds of cattle. These changes illustrate how modern resources give rise to relationships and community structures also considered modern.

Rekdal writes that, in Iraqw communities, the ceremonial brewing and drinking of sorghum beer historically symbolised the enduring, reciprocal nature of relationships between households (1996: 373). By comparison, the commercial beer now commonly found in rural stores is drunk casually, in groups in which individual relationships are informal and temporary. The fact that commercial beer is sold for cash also engenders different obligations and expectations than does the brewing and drinking of sorghum beer. Like commercial beer, European breeds of cattle – referred

to as “modern cows” by Iraqw – are sold for cash, meaning profits from their sale are individually owned and their exchange does not engender the social connections entailed in transactions involving local cattle. The increasingly monetary, rather than symbolic, value of bridewealth payments has given rise to similar changes among the Nyaturu, and these are discussed in more detail in chapter three to help explain the shift from training male athletes to training females in Team 100.

The fact that both ‘modern cows’ and commercial beer have monetary, rather than social or ritual, value among the Iraqw, means they are more easily associated with individualistic forms of exchange, and with modern relationships that are temporary and informal (Snyder, 2002: 166). Snyder further suggests that Iraqw youth view urban centres as important sites for the construction of such modern relationships because of the increased opportunities for wage labour and participating in money-based exchanges in cities compared with rural areas. Migration to urban centres also creates physical distance between constraining village ties and youth aspiring to build modern social networks and relationships (Snyder, 2002: 169).

As well as imagining modernity in contrast to rural life, Snyder argues many Tanzanians also imagine the modern in opposition to customs of the past and to ideas of ‘tradition’. Rural areas throughout Tanzania are often described as ‘backward-looking’, and individuals actively attempting to preserve customs others perceive as traditional, are viewed as “clinging to the past”, according to Snyder (2005: 4). Similar ideas were reflected in comments made by Zawadi, a teenager I spoke to in Arusha about what he felt it meant to be modern. For Zawadi, modernity was the opposite of *utamaduni*, which he explained was:

*“...like tradition or culture... like cultural songs or customs that are from traditional culture. Rap, R&B and hip hop, this is not utamaduni.... But Masaai songs and dances, this is utamaduni.... for example in the past, when farmers had no jembe<sup>18</sup>, this was not modern... now if farmers have only jembe and no machines, this is not modern either.... And in the city it is just normal for women*

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<sup>18</sup> Gardening hoe.

*to cook in the sufuria<sup>19</sup> – but in the village this is modern because in the villages people cook mostly in chungu... the black pot made from clay<sup>20</sup>”*

As well as implying modern things are not found in rural areas and in the past, Zawadi's comments further emphasise the relationship between modernity, commodities, and patterns of consumption, highlighted by Rekdal (1996) and Snyder (2002). The idea of enacting modernity through modes of consumption is returned to in chapter 5, where the girls living in the Team 100 camp are argued to aspire towards enacting a “cosmopolitan” style based around particular forms of consumption (Ferguson, 1999: 86).



**Figure 5:** A woman in Lighwa village, rural Singida, cooking with a *chungu* clay pot.  
(Source: author's collection)

The relationship between modernity, commodities, and patterns of consumption has also been explored in African anthropological literature, including in the prominent work of Meyer and Geshiere. Drawing on fieldwork in Ghana, these authors argue

<sup>19</sup> Round metallic cooking pot.

<sup>20</sup> See Figure 5

that new commodities offer different “means of objectification” through which new notions of selfhood are constructed (Meyer & Geschiere, 1999: 156). By “living through objects... not of one’s own creation”, Meyer and Geschiere argue Ghanaians identify themselves as modern consumers by extending beyond subsistence and consumption confined to the nuclear family (1999: 156). Niehaus further argues that with growing commodification, persons acquire a greater sense of individual autonomy because they are no longer enmeshed in relationships of reciprocal exchange (2002).

Modern relationships thus appear to give rise to greater opportunities for individual agency, however, Gwandu’s criticism of Max Iraghe’s selfishness highlights the fine line between expressing modern individuality and being considered selfish. Snyder (2002) also emphasises the precarious balancing act required to maintain relationships in rural areas and ties to tradition and the past in the process of modernisation. This reinforces Ferguson’s (1999) point that the stylistic competence required to enact modernity in various contexts is difficult to attain. Today, according to Snyder, young Iraqw straddle:

*“...an often wide divide. On the one hand... cultivating proper relationships within the community, and living up to local ideals of personhood establish respect and make various transitions... easier. On the other hand, many chafe against what they see as the constraints of the household, of elders’ authority, and of expectations of the local community. Yet it is very difficult to disconnect from these relationships....” (Snyder, 2002: 169)*

The process of distancing oneself from village communities and resources is further complicated and restricted by the scarcity of resources available to young Iraqw – and Tanzanians in general – aspiring to become modern individuals. The fact that Karl had to lower his expectations for Team 100 and “be content” with smaller goals provides an illustration of the pragmatic constraints he faced when pursuing ideals such as modernity (Keirstead, 2008). Like the ideal of modernity for most Tanzanians, ‘development’ and ‘empowerment’ for Karl remain incomplete and unachievable, but they are, nevertheless, concepts he engages with and strives towards.



The idea of multiple modernities is thus useful for understanding the differences between Karl and Gwandu's goals for Team 100, and the literature on modernisation provides a fitting framework through which to understand Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's goal of improving the lives of Team 100 athletes through running. This literature is also useful for understanding differences between Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's goals and those of Team 100 athletes for improving their own lives through running, particularly Ferguson's ideas on enacting modernity through cosmopolitan and localist cultural styles. Given the paucity of anthropological literature on running and sport in general (Sands, 1999: 3), particularly concerning female athletes<sup>21</sup>, this provides a distinctively different approach to the 'modernity' debate in anthropology. This also extends popular literature on East African female runners, the vast majority of which is framed by discourses of development and empowerment (Bloom & Herrman, 2004; Braid, 2003; Meier, 2005; Saavedra, 2007; Schontz, 2002; UN, 2005; UNICEF, 2004 Whalen, 2008).

The following chapter provides a background to Tanzania's current position in international athletics compared with nearby countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia, widely renowned as dominant forces in the world of middle and long distance running today. This provides a background to the context in which Team 100 operates. Historical and political differences between Tanzania and Kenya are used to help explain stark difference in the two countries' performances in international athletics, including the emergence and development of running in East Africa as a whole, and of the impact of Kenyan and Tanzanian independence on the growth of the sport in these two countries.

Nyerere and Kenyatta's presidencies are compared in terms of their contrasting policies and opinions on ideas of the 'West' and of 'Western modernity'. Nyerere's influential ideas of *maendeleo* through *ujamaa* are argued to be critical to

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<sup>21</sup> Although very little anthropological work has been done on women in sport, this is a relatively significant topic of research in sociology. Much sociological focus on women in sport has revolved around various ways in which women are disadvantaged in sport (Hargreaves, 1994; 1997; 1999; 2000; 2004) and the ways in which women's participation in sport can 'empower' women and act as an agent for the transformation of gender relations (Theberge, 1981; 1987; 1994; 1997; 1999; 2000; 2006). Other prominent sociologists on gender and sport include Michael Messner (1989; 1992; 1993; 2001; 2002), Messner, Duncan and Jensen (1993) and Ann Hall (1993; 1996).

understanding the ideas shaping Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's goals for the camp, particularly in their rejection of American education and their perception of the camp as being like a family. In chapter three, Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's goals for the girls are described in more detail, and shown to revolve around ideas of improving the girls' lives by enabling them to earn money autonomously in Arusha, separated from their rural village ties.

The time at the end of primary school at which girls are recruited for Team 100 is argued to be a critical point in their lives, affecting the way in which life in the camp is conceived of by Gwandu, Mama Gwandu, the girls and their parents. One of the only ethnographies of the Nyaturu, by Harold Schneider (1970), is used to provide insights helping to explain my question of why the camp changed from being one for Iraqw males to one for Nyaturu females. Gwandu's role in the camp is described as that of father figure to the girls, with a particular emphasis on the rights this affords him to control the girls' labour.

In chapter four, the girls' ambitions are described as revolving around ideas of becoming adult women and settling permanently in Arusha. Achieving high results in races is discussed as being secondary to this goal. The tensions and conflicts created by the differences between the girls' aspirations and those of Gwandu and Mama Gwandu are discussed in terms of conflicting cosmopolitan and localist styles (Ferguson, 1999: 86). The length of time Ferguson argues is required to acquire performative competence in a cultural style is related to the lengthy and gradual period of change that the girls undergo during their time in the camp. These changes are discussed in chapter five in terms of creating differences between the girls. The importance of securing permanent urban residence in Arusha is also discussed in this chapter, before concluding remarks are made in chapter six.

## **Chapter 2:**

# **Setting the Scene**

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Internationally, the East African region is perceived as a dominating force in middle and long distance running, in what has been described as an East African “running phenomenon” (Bale & Sang, 1996; ICEARS, 2007). As reflected in Karl’s depiction of East Africa as “home to the world’s greatest store of running talent” (Keirstead, 2008), these perceptions typically encompass a number of countries broadly located within eastern Africa, without differentiating between the achievements of individual athletes and nations.

Tanzania’s inclusion within such discourses is significant not only for the sponsorship opportunities it creates for camps such as Team 100, but also for the ways in which it influences the meanings and values Tanzanian athletes themselves attach to running. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of Tanzanian running compared to other countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia, which are also included in East African running stereotypes. Historical and political differences between Tanzania and Kenya are used to help explain stark differences between these neighbouring countries’ performances in international athletics. This discussion includes an overview of Kenyan and Tanzanian independence, and of the emergence and development of running in East Africa as a whole. Tanzania’s current low standing in international running results relative to the rest of East Africa provides a background to the context in which Team 100 operates, while the period immediately following Tanzanian independence is critical to understanding the ideas shaping Gwandu’s management of the camp.

### **Tanzania Relative to Kenya and Ethiopia**

Contrary to popular discourses, the production of world-class athletes is unevenly distributed throughout the eastern African region. A disproportionately high

concentration of elite East African runners emanate from the Rift Valley region, an area increasingly recognised as the “cultural core” (Bale & Sang, 1996: 139), “epicenter” (Rita, 2008) or “Mecca” (Kenya Tourist Board, 2008) of African running. In Tanzania, the popularity of running is also concentrated in the northeastern region of the country surrounding the Rift Valley, where Arusha and the Team 100 camp are located.

Training camps similar to Team 100 and the Tanzania Sports Academy are widespread throughout the entire Rift Valley region, particularly in Kenya where the towns of Iten and Eldoret are surrounded by numerous world-renowned facilities (Douglas, 2005a; 2005b). A number of these Kenyan camps also encompass secondary schools or combine training with secondary education and, given Arusha’s location in the Rift Valley region, it is unusual that the Tanzania Sports Academy is the only such training camp in the city. Conversely, few eastern African training camps focus solely on female athletes as does Team 100. In addition to being one of a small number of camps of its type, Team 100 also stands out as one of the earliest to have focussed on females – in Kenya, for example, the first running camp for female athletes was built by Lornah Kiplagat<sup>22</sup> in 2000 (Bloom & Herrman, 2008).

The distinctive status of Team 100 within East Africa is not paralleled by the running achievements of its athletes, nor those of Tanzanian runners in general. While Kenyan and Ethiopian athletes have dominated international middle and long distance events for a number of years (Pitsiladis et al, 2004), Tanzanian runners have not left a significant mark on the international running world. The poor performance of Tanzanian athletes relative to Kenyan and Ethiopian runners is confirmed by comparing their results in recent international competition, particularly cross-country events in which Kenyan and Ethiopian superiority is especially pronounced. Kenyan athletes have won a combined total of 245 medals in all past Cross-Country World Championship events, which is the highest number won by any nation. Ethiopians are

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<sup>22</sup> Lornah Kiplagat is a Kenyan-born athlete who now runs for the Netherlands, and has set world records in five kilometre, 10 mile, 20 kilometre and half marathon distances. She also won the 1997 and 1998 Los Angeles marathons, 1999 Amsterdam marathon and 2002 Osaka marathon, as well as the World Cross-Country Championships in 2007 and World Road Running Championships in 2006 and 2007.

placed second on the medal table with a total of 203 medals, while, with a comparatively low total of 59 medals, the United States is ranked third.

Tanzania, on the other hand, lies in 23<sup>rd</sup> place with a total of 4 medals from all past Cross-Country World Championship events (IAAF, 2008). The two most recent Cross-Country World Championships reflect a similar trend (see Table 1). In 2007, six of the top ten places of the senior men's race and five of the top ten women's race were won by Kenyan-born athletes. By comparison, the fastest Tanzanian male athlete finished in 13<sup>th</sup> place and the fastest Tanzanian female in 21<sup>st</sup> place in the 2007 competition. In 2008, five of the top 10 places in the senior men and senior women's races were won by Kenyan-born athletes, while two places were won by Ethiopian male and four by Ethiopian female athletes. In 2008, Tanzania did not send a team to the Cross-Country World Championships<sup>23</sup>.

Given the two countries' close geographical proximity, the differences between Tanzanian and Kenyan athletic performances are especially striking. John Bale, one of the most prominent authors on East African athletics, attributes these contemporary differences to a number of social, political and historical factors, and argues that in the 1950s and early 1960s – when Kenyan athletic dominance began – Tanzania's internal political and economic conditions were not as conducive to the growth of athletics as they were in Kenya (Bale & Sang, 1996: 121).

The 1950s and early 1960s marked a period of struggle that preceded both countries' attainment of independence from British rule. In Tanzania, this occurred in 1961, after which the Republic of Tanganyika was formed in 1962 (Iliffe, 1979: 569) with Julius Nyerere elected as president (Omari, 1995: 24). Nyerere believed "traditional" Tanzanian principles of communal living had been smothered by the foreign ideologies of the colonial administration, and that this had hindered Tanzanian development (Komba, 1995: 36). Prior to independence, Nyerere's political career had focussed on fighting colonialism by building Tanzanian nationalism and national unity (Cliffe, 1969: 212; Omari, 1995: 25).

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<sup>23</sup> Gwandu explained that reasons for this related to the prohibitively high cost of sending a team of athletes from Tanzania to Edinburgh, where the 2008 competition was held.

### 2008 Cross Country World Championship Results

#### Men

1. Kenenisa Bekele	Ethiopia
2. Leonard Patrick Komon	Kenya
3. Zersenay Tadese	Eritrea
4. Joseph Ebuva	Kenya
5. Moses Ndiema Masai	Kenya
6. Felix Kikwai Kibore	Qatar
7. Gideon Lekumok Ngatuny	Kenya
8. Ahmad Hassan Abdullah	Qatar
9. Habtamu Fikadu	Ethiopia
10. Bernard Kiprop Kipyego	Kenya

#### Women

1. Tirunesh Dibaba	Ethiopia
2. Mestawet Tufa	Ethiopia
3. Linet Chepkwemai Masai	Kenya
4. Doris Chepkwemai Changeywo	Kenya
5. Hilda Kibet	Netherlands*
6. Gelete Burka	Ethiopia
7. Priscah Jepleting Cherono	Kenya
8. Margaret Wangari Muriuki	Kenya
9. Meselech Melkamu	Ethiopia
10. Grace Kwamboka Momanyi	Kenya

### 2007 Cross Country World Championship Results

#### Men

1. Zersenay Tadese	Eritrea
2. Moses Mosop	Kenya
3. Bernard Kiprop Kipyego	Kenya
4. Gideon Lekumok Ngatuny	Kenya
5. Hosea Mwok Macharinyang	Kenya
6. Micheal Kipyego	Kenya
7. Tadese Tola	Ethiopia
8. Mubarak Hassan Shami	Qatar
9. Edwin Cheruiyot Soi	Kenya
10. Martin Kitiyo Toroitich	Uganda

#### Women

1. Lornah Kiplagat	Netherlands*
2. Tirunesh Dibaba	Ethiopia
3. Meselech Melkamu	Ethiopia
4. Gelete Burka	Ethiopia
5. Florence Jebet Kiplagat	Kenya
6. Pamela Chepchumba	Kenya
7. Priscah Jepleting Cherono	Kenya
8. Vivian Cheruiyot	Kenya
9. Simret Sultan	Eritrea
10. Wude Ayalew	Ethiopia

\* Athletes born in Kenya

**Table 1:** Tables showing results from the 2008 and 2007 World Cross-Country Championship events. Listed are the names of top 10 competitors in the senior men and senior women races in order of finishing, as well as the country represented by the athlete (*Source: IAAF, 2008*).

In 1963, Kenya also gained independence (Maloba, 1998) and, in 1964, Jomo Kenyatta was elected president (Tamarkin, 1978: 298). The same year, popular revolts in Zanzibar led to its unification with the Tanganyika mainland, and the formation of the Republic of Tanzania (Speller, 2007). Following the formation of Tanzania, Nyerere's ambitions shifted from nation building to ideas of 'developing' and 'modernising' Tanzania. Nyerere argued pre-colonial Tanzanian society had been socialist, in the sense that communities were formed around extended family structures in which individuals:

*“...were governed by three fundamental principles: living together, working together, and sharing equitably the fruits of their work.... Their culture encouraged them to think of themselves primarily as part of a large group, a community, and thus the needs of each as an individual tended to be superseded by his needs as a member of society” (Nyerere, 1968 cited in Komba, 1995: 36).*

Nyerere’s vision was thus to ‘modernise’ and ‘develop’ Tanzania using ‘African’ principles of communal living (Cliffe, 1969: 240; Komba, 1995: 36; Kweka, 1995: 73). While these ideas emphasised drastic changes and distance from the colonial administration, Kenyatta’s focus in Kenya was on reconciliation and continuity between his and colonial policies. Nyerere’s vision for the modernisation and development of Tanzania was officially put into action in 1967 with the implementation of *ujamaa* development policies and the formalisation of Swahili as national language (Cliffe, 1969: 255; Komba, 1995: 37). Swahili united the more than 120 disparate ethnic groups living within Tanzania under one common language, highlighting Nyerere’s continued concern for maintaining national unity. This also further emphasised Nyerere’s rejection of British colonial ideologies, including the English language.

The Swahili term *ujamaa*<sup>24</sup> itself accentuated the uniquely Tanzanian nature of Nyerere’s ideas for development, a concept he also often referred to in Swahili by term *maendeleo* (Nyerere, 1973). For Nyerere, *ujamaa* and *maendeleo* took on greater ideological significance than is implied in their English translations. Both terms were used in deliberate reference to pre-colonial social values – *maendeleo* through *ujamaa* implied modernisation through traditionally African family and community structures (Nyerere, 1968 cited in Komba, 1995: 37)<sup>25</sup>. Accordingly, competitive sports such as running were rejected in Tanzania, where they were seen as an elitist and hierarchical institution that contradicted Nyerere’s ideologies (Beamish, 1982: 156; Budd, 2004: 35; Riordan, 1999: 63). Influenced by the way in which running had been introduced into East Africa, the sport was also rejected as it was considered an embodiment of the imperial imposition of alien values on indigenous movement cultures.

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<sup>24</sup> Extended family or familyhood

<sup>25</sup> This is illustrated in what has now become one of Nyerere’s most often quoted goals for his country, expressed as follows: “We are Tanzanians and wish to remain Tanzanians as we develop” (Nyerere, 1967 quoted in Temu, 1969: 213).

### **The Origins of Athletics in East Africa**

During the twentieth century, running and athletics were introduced into British mission schools throughout Africa, in the hopes of civilising and disciplining “The African” (Urch, 1968 quoted in Bale & Sang, 1996: 72). Organised sports such as track and field athletics were considered to require more discipline than the sensuous, expressive forms of bodily movement associated with Africans at this time (Bale & Sang, 1996: 72; Donnelly, 1993: 122; Maguire, 1999: 65; Mewett, 2003: 331; Morford et al., 1993: 69) and, for this reason, drills and specific, regimented athletic training schedules formed a significant part of the physical education programmes of mission schools (Andrews, 1993; Genevieve & Harvey, 1995; Harvey & Sparks, 1991).

With the introduction of organised running came the introduction of organised races. In order to quantify and measure performance in competition, however, running spaces first needed to be measured and standardised, after which results could be formally recorded and athletes’ performance ranked (Henning, 1998: 149). The ranking of athletes further added to the appeal of using athletics as a disciplinary tool and, Bale argues, the introduction of competition and uniformly measured running tracks played a significant role in transforming running into an activity imagined as modern:

*“The running track, with its uniform plane and imperial measurements, was...an imperial strategy involving the mastery of space. Whereas many traditional body cultures had taken place within the homestead... the sports field... required a special space, separated from the day to day activities of the people and their social life. It was a typically modern, territorialised space” (Bale & Sang, 1996: 97-98).*

By 1933, organised running competitions had effectively been contained to the confines of running tracks in Kenya. Around the same time, other types of sporting competition had begun to emerge in more informal, disorganised contexts outside of sports fields, which Bale describes as “neither wholly African nor wholly European” (1996: 86). By the 1940s, these forms of competition had become the source of amusement and spectacle for European settlers throughout Africa. The lack of



seriousness<sup>26</sup> with which competitive African athleticism was treated continued until the mid 1950s, when East African countries took part in athletic competition outside of the African continent for the first time (Bale & Sang, 1996: 86).

In 1954, teams representing Kenya and Uganda competed in the Vancouver British Empire and Commonwealth Games with poor results. The press ridiculed the Kenyan and Ugandan athletes for their “unscientific” and “unsophisticated” approach to racing (Bale & Sang, 1996: 4), describing them as having provided “amusement” for English crowds (1996: 90). Like contemporary popular discourses depicting all East African runners as superior, African athletes in the 1954 Games were similarly constructed as a homogenous group considered fundamentally different to ‘Europeans’.

Following the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games, Kenya and Ethiopia began making a more positive mark on the international running world. Kenyan male athletes won gold and bronze medals in the 1958 British Championship three-mile event and, in 1964, Kenya won their first Olympic athletic medal in the Tokyo Games (Bale & Sang, 1996: 8). The biggest turning point in African athletic stereotypes, however, came after the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games where Ethiopian and Kenyan teams dominated all middle and long distance running events (Bale, 2007: 11). This marked, in a relatively short space of time, the evolution of East African runners from being considered a source of amusement and ridicule to being an international running “phenomenon” (Bale & Sang, 1996; ICEARS, 2007) at the centre of envious speculation about the cause of their sudden success (Hoberman, 2007: 211).

Attempts to rationalise the results of the 1968 Games focussed primarily on the high altitude environments in which the majority of Kenyan and Ethiopian athletes were found to be living and training (Bale, 2007: 11; Bale & Sang, 1996: 138-162). The “altitude factor” subsequently emerged as the most popular explanation for Kenyan and Ethiopian running success, in which it was argued that training and living at high

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<sup>26</sup> See page 87 in Bale and Sang (1996) for examples of photographs that Bale argues were taken to depict African athlete as a spectacle.

altitudes naturally produced physical attributes that were favourable for running (Bale & Sang, 1996: 11; Manners, 1997: 18; 2007). The once scorned at “unscientific” running style of east African athletes was re-imagined as natural, in the desirable sense of having been untouched by scientific training principles (Cashmore, 1982: 42-56; Harris, 1999: 171; Kenntner, 1983: 93).

Following the 1968 Olympic Games, African runners began to be seen as a desirable commodity that could be exploited through increased global exposure. In Kenya, this was achieved largely through the work of the American Peace Corps, who were instrumental in helping the growth of Kenyan athletics through building global networks linking Kenyan athletes to the rest of the world. The Peace Corps had been active throughout East Africa since the early 1960s, where they had been established to “serve the cause of peace” (USA.gov, 2007). Much of the Peace Corps’ work in Kenyan had revolved around work in schools, where their focus had been strongly sport-oriented.

Peace Corps volunteers began building relationships between Kenyan athletes, with whom they worked, and coaches in the US until, by the 1970s, Kenya contributed athletes to the American university athletic scholarship system. First conceived of in the early 1950s, the initial aim of the athletic scholarship had been to improve the athletics departments of small, out-of-the-way universities by recruiting talented student-athletes, thereby raising the visibility and prestige of the university as a whole. Although scholarship selection policies initially restricted selection to include only local athletes, in the late 1950s these were reviewed to include regional selection and, by the 1970s, recruitment had become global (Bale, 1991: 16-18). By 1975, Kenya was the highest donor country of track and field student-athletes to American universities in the world (Bale & Sang, 1996: 125). Thus, Kenyatta’s ambitions for embracing some of the cultural remnants of its colonial history enabled the use of sporting competition to inspire national pride, particularly through sports such as running in which Kenyan athletes dominated.

This process of indigenising imperial sport has also been observed in a number of other ethnographic contexts, including in the renowned appropriation of cricket by Trobriand Islanders (Kildea & Leach, 1975). The indigenisation of cricket has also

been written about by Appadurai (1995), in the context of postcolonial India. Appadurai argues that, like running in East Africa, cricket was introduced in India as a means of transmitting Victorian values and “disciplining the Orientals” (Appadurai, 1995: 28). Like running in Kenya, however, cricket rapidly became a tool for inspiring national pride and identity (Appadurai, 1995: 31-33).

In Tanzania, by the time of the 1968 Olympic Games, Nyerere’s desire to Africanise the Tanzanian curriculum had led to the withdrawal of the Peace Corps from schools, and eventually from Tanzania altogether (Bale & Sang, 1996: 115; Buchert, 1994: 95). In addition to Tanzania’s lack of existing connections with American universities, the national language of Swahili made it more difficult for Tanzanians to qualify for athletic scholarships than it was for Kenyans. Following Nyerere, Tanzania pursued its own path for *maendeleo*, but the sport of running subsequently failed to “take-off” in Tanzania in the way it had in Kenya (Bale & Sang, 1996: 115).

### **Gwandu and *Maendeleo***

*Ujamaa* development policies failed to bring the *maendeleo* they promised to. While the association of *ujamaa* communal living with socialism discouraged foreign investment into Tanzania, the use of Swahili significantly restricted interaction with outside countries. Meanwhile, Nyerere’s strategies for encouraging communal work effectively halted agricultural and industrial production within the country, while protective, inward-looking import substitution policies further stifled export expansion and political and economic competition (Shayo, 2005). This period of economic decline lasted through to the mid 1980s (Dashwood & Pratt, 1999: 239; Komba, 1995: 40; Snyder, 2001: 135; Svendsen, 1995: 115-21).

Despite its resoundingly negative effects on the Tanzanian economy, *ujamaa* is nevertheless ambivalently viewed by Tanzanians today. Drawing on her research among the Iraqw, Snyder (2005: 4-6) argues Tanzanians today are intensely aware of the impact of *ujamaa* on their current marginal status within the global political economy, but that the ideal of *maendeleo* – as imagined by Nyerere – continues to act as a “moving goalpost” for measuring ‘progress’ in Tanzania as a nation. Since Nyerere’s retirement in 1985 the idea of *maendeleo* has been taken up in the agendas

of numerous politicians, political parties and development organisations throughout Tanzania<sup>27</sup>.

Despite its association with Tanzania's current marginality in world affairs, many Tanzanians nevertheless positively view the legacy of *ujamaa* as having created a point of difference and Tanzanian uniqueness. Gwandu also emphasised to me that Nyerere's *maendeleo* ideals were widely regarded as the foundation upon which Tanzania has maintained internal harmony and peace since independence. In Gwandu's own words, Nyerere's ideas were:

*"...very, very good... but ujamaa was very bad for the people.... So it was the implementation of Nyerere's ideas that was very, very bad, and the only good that came of it was the creation of [national] unity and [a national] language"*

The failure of *ujamaa* socialism has therefore not led to alternatives such as Western-style capitalism being considered more viable paths for developing and modernising Tanzania. The perceived danger of emulating 'Western' culture in the quest for modernity is illustrated by the negative stereotypes about neighbouring Kenya, which is viewed as being more modern and Westernised than Tanzania (Snyder, 2005: 5). Maintaining Tanzanian uniqueness also continues to be widely considered an important means of transcending the negative aspects of Western modernity. Gwandu's aspiration for improving lives through running draws on a number of characteristics of Nyerere's *maendeleo*, particularly in his rejection of American university education for Team 100 athletes. Gwandu also frequently emphasised that Team 100 was "like a family", thereby reinforcing his assertion that the ideology of communal living behind *ujamaa* was good, even if *ujamaa* itself was bad.

Snyder argues the internalisation of Nyerere's ideas for *maendeleo* in this way is common throughout Tanzania, and that ideas of *maendeleo* are reflected in the personal aspirations of many Tanzanians (Snyder, 2005: 8-10). Rather than referring solely to state-driven goals for modernisation and development, *maendeleo* now also

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<sup>27</sup>The *Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo* (CHADEMA) – a conservative political party in Tanzania today – is one such example. The party, whose name translates as 'Party for Democracy and Progress', has goals to further 'development' and 'progress' in Tanzania using the collective "power of the people" working together (Shayo, 2005:15).

encompasses individual ideas of self-improvement that are harder to define. Like the idea of modernisation it is often translated as, *maendeleo* can thus be seen as a term with multiple meanings and interpretations that is enacted in a multitude of different ways. While reflecting ideas of Nyerere's vision for *maendeleo*, Gwandu's goals for improving athletes' lives through running were fluid and relational, and based on ideas he manipulated in different contexts for various reasons.

Although he frequently emphasised the importance of living communally while in the Team 100 camp, for example, Gwandu argued that the most significant way running could improve athletes' lives was through the opportunities it created for them to earn money and have their own, individual source of income. Gwandu emphasised the importance of achieving individual autonomy by pointing out successful athletes whom he described as having been "cheated" by requests for money from extended family. There was one female athlete living in Arusha whom Gwandu particularly feared would soon lose all the money she had earned through running because, according to him, she constantly received demands for money from people claiming to be related to her, who argued she was indebted to them by family obligation.

Gwandu's fears emphasise the difficulties Snyder (2002) argues Tanzanians often face when attempting to balance family and community obligations with the process of becoming autonomous individuals. Competitive running adds further complexities to this already complex problem, in that the sport continues to be ambivalently associated with modern Western culture throughout Tanzania. In this regard, running appears to contradict the ideas of maintaining Tanzanian uniqueness and transcending the negative aspects of Western modernity.

Gwandu overcame this ambiguity by using popular discourses of East African running talent to emphasise what he perceived to be naturally Tanzanian characteristics in the sport. During his time in America, Gwandu had broken a number of long-standing track records at SPC (Cavazos et al., 2005). Gwandu recalled stories to me of his team mates' admiration for his running talent as somehow being more natural than theirs, and he drew on such ideas to contrast the running abilities of Tanzanian athletes to those of "White" athletes:

*“I am so proud of our country – the Black man beating the White man!! It should be the other way!! ... but the White man can train... the stride, the muscles, the arms working... the exercises and all the science... but for these girls it is all natural!.. and phew! [exclaims in admiration] they can run so fast!...”*

Gwandu reasoned that, if running was naturally Tanzanian, then participation in the sport did not entail aspects of Western culture, regardless of how the sport had been introduced into Tanzania in its modern, competitive form. Gwandu’s national pride again reflects aspects of Nyerere’s ideas for *maendeleo* through *ujamaa*. Gwandu also saw running as a fitting means by which to obtain an individual source of income because a successful running career inevitably required migration into the city, away from the remote northeastern regions of Tanzania from which Team 100 athletes were recruited, and the reciprocal relationships that bound them to these communities.

While the participation in and popularity of running in Tanzania is concentrated in these rural northeastern regions, most are accessible only via disintegrating dirt roads that become unusable during strong rains<sup>28</sup>. This significantly restricts rural athletes’ mobility, and ability to travel to and compete in races throughout the country – a rural isolation that is further accentuated by poor communication facilities in rural areas, which enable only limited access to information about events and contact with national and international running organisations. By contrast, the city of Arusha is one of the country’s largest and fastest-growing urban centres. Like other cities throughout Tanzania, Arusha is accessible via well maintained, sealed, all weather roads, and has widespread communication infrastructures, including Internet and phone facilities, television, radio and newspapers.

From Arusha, the flow of information and athletes between national events is thus more straightforward than from rural areas, as is travel to races outside of Tanzania, facilitated by Arusha’s proximity to the Kilimanjaro International Airport and the Nairobi-Moshi highway. The fact that athletes for Team 100 were recruited from rural areas illustrates the need for some information and athletes to nevertheless be able to flow to and from these areas, in order for the camp to function efficiently. Gwandu maintained strong relationships with a number of individuals in rural areas,

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<sup>28</sup> See Appendix 5 for a map of Tanzania showing highways

particularly with two rural coaches he employed as talent scouts, whose responsibility was to identify talented rural athletes who could potentially be recruited for Team 100. The most common method Gwandu and these two coaches used to communicate information to and from rural areas was via mobile phone, which all three of them owned.

Gwandu also kept in frequent contact with the girls' parents, although none of them owned mobile phones. Gwandu knew sufficient people in the villages who did own phones and could pass messages to the girls' parents to be able to maintain his frequent communication with them. Given the poor quality of rural roads, physical travel between Arusha and remote rural village seldom occurred other than when a new athlete was recruited for the camp. When such travel to or from a remote area was necessary, it was done on one of the public transport services available from Arusha, given that Gwandu did not own a car.

The majority of the female athletes living and training with Team 100 throughout my fieldwork indicated that they did not ever wish to return to the villages in which they were born. Like Gwandu, the girls saw running as a unique opportunity to escape village relationships and become autonomous, urban women. Returning to Karl and Gwandu's idea that the girls were "better off" in the Team 100 camp than in their natal villages, the following chapter explores the ways in which Gwandu imagines improvement in the girls' lives. Some of the opportunities available to young Nyaturu women not involved in running will be discussed, as well as the question of why Team 100 was made into a camp solely for Nyaturu female athletes. This discussion will be related to obstacles that are perceived to hinder self-improvement among the Nyaturu.

## Chapter 3:

# Running to Improve Lives

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Mama Gwandu's description of village life as having been "very hard" was used by Gwandu to justify his idea that Team 100 athletes were better off living in the camp than if they had remained in their natal villages. He and Mama Gwandu argued that life for the Nyaturu was "harder" than for other people in Tanzania, that they required more help to improve their lives than others, and that this was why he had decided to train Nyaturu female athletes rather than Iraqw males. This chapter describes some of the specific ways Gwandu and Mama Gwandu conceived of running as improving the girls' lives. Using Harold Schneider's concept of "people as wealth" (1970:104), Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's roles in the camp are described as those of parental figures for Team 100 athletes. The empirical material in this chapter is based on the frequent conversations I had with Gwandu during my time in the camp, and on discussions and interviews I carried out with other coaches in Arusha, many of whom I also regularly saw during the Team 100 girls' daily training sessions.

I spent two of the three months of my fieldwork living in the Team 100 camp in Arusha, and the remaining month travelling to the villages in the Singida region from which the girls were recruited. The city of Arusha<sup>29</sup> lies surrounded by some of East Africa's most renowned ecological features, including Mounts Kilimanjaro and Meru, the Serengeti Plain, Ngorongoro Crater, Olduvai Gorge and a host of National Parks and Wildlife Reserves. Bustling with year-round tourist activity, Arusha's busy streets are permanently filled with an eclectic mix of expatriates, tourists, local Tanzanians and the over 500 United Nations officials from over 80 different countries temporarily

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<sup>29</sup> See Appendix 6 for a map of Arusha.



settled in Arusha since 1994, employed in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

At an elevation of 1300 meters, Arusha enjoys a cool, temperate climate that helps make the city popular among runners drawn away from the hot, humid weather common at Tanzania's lower altitudes. The Arusha climate is also conducive to cultivating the coffee, wheat and maize crops fringing the city's outskirts. The Nairobi-Moshi highway marks the northern boundary of Arusha, leading to Nairobi via the Kenyan border to the north, and to Mt Kilimanjaro via Moshi town to the east.

Just north of the highway, sprawling uphill towards Mt Meru in the distance, lies the neighbourhood of Ilboru, in which the majority of the city's athletes live and where Team 100 and the Tanzania Sports Academy are located. The city's only officially measured running track is located in the Arusha stadium in the city centre, although throughout Ilboru, numerous grass and dried dirt fields often convert into unofficial running tracks for training and impromptu races.

Flowing down through Ilboru farmland, the Ilboru River gradually widens to become the more significant Naura River, which divides the centre of Arusha city in half. To the west of the river, narrow, winding dirt roads run from the chaotic central market to the bus station through dusty, tired-looking buildings, while wide, well-maintained tar-sealed roads connect expansive government buildings, airline offices and safari companies to the east. Reflecting the city's cosmopolitan flavours and influences, the south of Arusha is littered with trendy restaurants and bars, popular among the expatriate and tourist populations.

During my time in Arusha I participated in the everyday activities of Team 100 athletes, including cooking (see Figure 6), cleaning and, where possible and appropriate, daily training sessions. I soon realised that I would need the help of an assistant to increase my interaction with the girls in these day-to-day activities, given they spoke little or no English. I encountered a number of difficulties in the process of finding someone suitable, and Mabilia (2005) – who has carried out fieldwork among Gogo women in Tanzania – describes having faced many similar problems. Like Mabilia, the nature of my fieldwork meant that a young female assistant was more

suitable than a male, while the requirement of being able to speak English meant that I effectively needed a young woman with a high school diploma. All primary education in Tanzania is carried out in Swahili, and the fact that none of the girls in Team 100 had attended secondary school explained why none had learnt to speak English.



**Figure 6:** Emily cooking beans and maize for the athletes' lunch.  
(Source: author's collection)

My assistant also had to be willing and able to spend time in the camp with me everyday. This implied she would not have commitments of her own, which, given secondary education created more opportunities for employment, added a complication to my already complex requirements. Nevertheless, I eventually found a young girl named Nicky who lived in Ilboru and who, having worked for an American missionary organisation in Arusha for some time, spoke English fluently. Nicky was 23, slightly older than the oldest girls in the camp and, although a seemingly ideal assistant, her presence in the camp soon highlighted an additional problem. While the majority of Team 100 athletes were Nyaturu, one athlete – named Emily – and Gwandu were Iraqw, meaning Swahili was the language used to communicate between all members of the camp.

As Nicky and I discovered, however, the Nyaturu girls often excluded Emily from their conversations when Gwandu was not around, by speaking Nyaturu rather than Swahili together. Nicky herself was Chagga, meaning she did not speak Nyaturu.

While this problem proved difficult to solve, it paradoxically enabled me to gain deep insights into the dynamics of the camp in the early days of my fieldwork. After numerous unsuccessful attempts to find a young woman living in Arusha who could speak Nyaturu and English, I realised that not only were Nyaturu migrants to Arusha scarce, but that Nyaturu, who did live in the city, often no longer spoke Nyaturu.

Like Mabilia (2005), I discovered that while small, rural secondary schools such as those in the Singida region – or in Mabilia’s case, the Dodoma region – taught only basic English, secondary schools in larger urban areas such as Arusha did not teach Nyaturu – or, for Mabilia, Cigogo. Mabilia argues that languages not widely spoken outside rural contexts, such as Cigogo and Nyaturu, are typically associated with the ‘traditional’ aspects of rural communities throughout Tanzania (2005: 13). By contrast, Swahili and, increasingly, English are associated with ‘modern’ urban lifestyles (Mabilia, 2005: 13). Urbanised Gogo who had completed school in the city were consequently unlikely to have learnt to speak Cigogo, as were urbanised Nyaturu – of which there were few to begin with.

Mirroring Snyder’s observations among the Iraqw (2002: 169), Mabilia’s description of her search for a research assistant also accentuates the complexities faced by young Gogo attempting to separate themselves from ‘traditional’ rural communities and relationships. The topics of breastfeeding and sexuality, at the centre of Mabilia’s research, are considered taboo by rural Gogo women and, despite their desire to distance themselves from rural lifestyles, Mabilia illustrates ways in which even young urbanised women were affected by these taboos. Many of the young urban women Mabilia attempted to employ as assistants refused to discuss taboos surrounding breastfeeding and sexuality with rural women, which, Mabilia argues, demonstrates the “strong roots of traditional aspects” (Mabilia, 2005: 14).

The “strong roots” Mabilia refers to were also suggested in Team 100 by the fact that Mama Gwandu continued to speak Nyaturu rather than Swahili with the girls, despite the fact she had been living in Arusha for numerous years and had few remaining connections with Kinyetto village. Given she had not attended secondary school and could not speak English either, Mama Gwandu was unable to help with Nyaturu-English translation. She eventually suggested to me that I ask an older Nyaturu

woman named Mama Konawa, who was one of the only female executives on the Arusha athletics committee. Despite her English being hesitant, Mama Konawa agreed to help me interview the girls.

On the day of our first interview, Mama Konawa arrived at the camp two hours later than the time we had agreed to meet. Judging by the way she was greeted by Gwandu, Mama Gwandu and the athletes, I immediately realised that she was a well-respected woman in Arusha, and that the girls were very intimidated by her. Mama Gwandu instructed the girls to prepare a full meal for Mama Konawa before beginning the interview work, which we were able to start only after she had eaten, a further two hours later. In addition to acting shyly around Mama Konawa in their interviews, the girls also struggled to answer my questions due to what I realised was Mama Konawa's manner of asking. Rather than translating my questions to the girls, Mama Konawa always suggested answers she thought were appropriate, worded in such a way that the girls could only agree or disagree rather than provide their own opinions.

Many of my recordings from these interviews, thus, contain very little conversation. Much of what is recorded, is translated by Mama Konawa as "she said yes/no", including rare occasions in which the girls provided more detailed answers. I was fortunately able to later replay these tapes and get re-translated what I had originally missed, and after three separate attempts with Mama Konawa that produced similar results, I decided she was not a suitable person to hire as my assistant. As the girls grew more accustomed to my presence in the camp over time they spoke to me in Swahili more often, which I understood increasingly well and which reduced the urgency of having to find a Nyaturu-English speaker. Turning back to Nicky for help, I was eventually able to carry out more successful interviews with the girls in Swahili.

### **Nyaturu Women**

The difficulties I encountered in attempting to find a young female in Arusha who could speak both Nyaturu and English were significant for highlighting the impact, on the Nyaturu, of the poor roading infrastructure in the Singida region. The pragmatic difficulties of travelling to Arusha from Singida were reflected in the paucity of Nyaturu migrants living in the city, which Mama Gwandu argued maintained a widely

held perception throughout Tanzania that the Nyaturu were the country's least educated, poorest and most "backward" people. Although she does not mention the Nyaturu specifically, Snyder notes that stereotypes about ethnic groups considered more 'backward' than others are common throughout Tanzania – a label she argues emphasises that ideas of progress and self-improvement are relational (2005: 4).

The perceptions of Nyaturu as being the poorest and least educated ethnic group in Tanzania are reflected in figures showing Singida as having one of the highest poverty levels and lowest number of public secondary schools and teachers per capita of any other region in the country (ADF, 2007: 14; Lewin, 2003; Swai & Ndidde, 2006; TANROADS, 2008). Consequently, schools located throughout Singida are typically overcrowded, a problem regional authorities counter by attempting to restrict the number of students eligible for school enrolment.

Secondary schooling is not compulsory in Tanzania, and students wishing to continue beyond primary education are required to pass a primary school leaving exam designed to ensure only academically capable students are allowed into secondary schools. The mark required to 'pass' this exam is often readjusted based on the number of spaces available in schools, however, so that more students 'fail' the exam in overcrowded areas. Rural Singida consistently achieves the highest rate of exam 'failure' of any region in Tanzania. In 2004, for example, the average rate of transition from primary to secondary school was 20% for Singida, compared with a national average rate of transition of 36% (Swai, 2006). Throughout Tanzania overall, significantly fewer females than males pass this exam (ILO, 2004)

All Team 100 athletes had failed their primary school leaving exams, which Gwandu argued meant running did not interfere with their education. Despite what I perceived as his downplaying of education relative to the goals Karl had for Team 100, Gwandu asserted that a minimum education was "very important", and that preconditions to selection for the camp were that girls had completed primary school and were unable to continue because of having failed the leaving exam. Rather than being unwilling to provide a means for his athletes to continue studying in Arusha, therefore, Gwandu was in fact prevented from doing so by the fact he deliberately recruited athletes ineligible for secondary education.

In support of Gwandu's preconditions to selection for Team 100, Mama Gwandu further argued that it was better to recruit individuals who were ineligible for secondary school because they needed more help to improve their lives than those who were able to continue their education. If the Nyaturu were the most "backward" people in Tanzania, Mama Gwandu reasoned, then Nyaturu females were at a particular disadvantage given the higher rate of exam failure among girls and the fact that they were more often kept home from school to work than boys. Nyaturu girls therefore needed the most help to improve their lives, according to Mama Gwandu, and it was specifically because Team 100 recruited uneducated Nyaturu females that she conceived of her and Gwandu as doing "God's work".

Primary school for Nyaturu girls typically ended around the age of 13 or 14. Given the high chance of exam failure, this age was also commonly perceived of as the end of a girls' status as a student and the beginning of a period of change, at the end of which she would be considered an adult woman. Mama Gwandu asserted that, had the athletes currently training in Team 100 not been selected for the camp, this period of change would have revolved around marriage, pregnancy and motherhood, because marriage and motherhood were the two most important markers of adulthood for women in rural Singida. Selection for Team 100 thus came at a critical moment of change in the girls' lives, replacing the inevitable change from student to adult woman with a change from student to athlete.

The most obvious difference between these status changes was that becoming an athlete entailed migrating to Arusha. Given the pragmatic difficulties of migration for the Nyaturu, Gwandu considered their selection for Team 100 to have been particularly beneficial to the Nyaturu girls training in the camp, for whom there were few other opportunities to earn money autonomously. Like the process of becoming an adult woman in rural Singida, which could be delayed by marriage negotiations lasting several years, the process of becoming an athlete was also lengthy and complex. While an internationally successful athlete had the potential to generate an income Gwandu perceived of as crucial to improving the girls' lives, becoming a successful athlete required consistently high performance in races, which was only attainable after several years of intense and difficult training.

Throughout these training years, little or no money was generated from races, making running an economically unproductive activity. In this regard, training to become a successful athlete was comparable to leisure or play activities associated with childhood. Given that other markers of adulthood, such as marriage and motherhood, were not necessary to the pursuit of a running career, the transformation from student to athlete did not automatically entail a move out of childhood into adulthood. Gwandu asserted that after having earned money from achieving a number of high results internationally, the girls would nevertheless marry and have children “like other girls”. This implied marriage and motherhood were also important markers of adult womanhood in Arusha but that, for Gwandu, becoming an athlete preceded the transformation into an adult woman.



**Figure 7:** School children running in a race in Lighwa village, rural Singida.  
(Source: author's collection)

### **Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's Roles in the Camp**

For Gwandu and Mama Gwandu the function of Team 100 was to both train girls to enable them to become successful athletes and, simultaneously, to prepare them to become adult women. Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's roles in the camp reflected a

clear division between these two aims, with Gwandu being responsible for training the girls and Mama Gwandu for teaching them about womanhood. Gwandu's role involved the physical training of the girls' bodies through principles he described as "scientific", which included exercises in weight training and rules about nutrition and recovery. Gwandu often emphasised strong differences between his and Mama Gwandu's approach, which he described as being very closely based on the teachings of the church she encouraged the girls to attend. Although he described himself as a "man of science" and occasionally complained that Mama Gwandu's emphasis on church attendance was "too much", the fact that he regularly allowed the girls to miss training sessions to attend bible classes or Sunday school suggests Gwandu nevertheless felt the church's influence to be of some benefit to the girls.

The main way that the girls benefited from attending church, according to Gwandu, was in the way it taught them to distance themselves from what he called "local beliefs". Gwandu argued that, in rural areas, people often held beliefs such as that God was "in a tree", and ridiculed the idea that people consequently prayed to trees and other inanimate objects. His disapproval of such beliefs was also highlighted in stories he recalled of athletes he had expelled from Team 100 in the past, as in the case of one male athlete who had fallen ill:

*"One day he got a headache, a terrible head pain... [laughs, remembering the story]... and it was very bad, he couldn't cope.... I said to him, 'You must go to the hospital' and he told me 'No, no'... [laughs again and cannot talk for a few moments from laughing]... he told me 'No, no' and was very insistent that he had to go home, back to the village. He said 'The solution to the problem is there' and he went to see a special man [turning to me] you know these traditional medicine men?... And so he left! And I told him 'Don't come back' because you cannot have these local beliefs for running..."*

Gwandu encouraged the girls' participation in church activities so long as he perceived this to be reasonable and rational, and that it did not become "too much". By contrast, Mama Gwandu was more forceful in persuading the girls to attend church and pray as often as possible, and she encouraged them to humbly accept all race successes and failures as part of God's will. Mama Gwandu argued that bible classes and Sunday school taught the girls good manners and important morals, and



about behaviour that was considered appropriate for adult women living in the urban context of Arusha in general.

Mama Gwandu was seldom present during the girls' training sessions and, likewise, Gwandu rarely attended Sunday mass. This clear division was reinforced at the end of my first week in the camp, when Gwandu translated Mama Gwandu's inquiry about whether I would be attending mass the next morning and whether I had appropriate clothes to wear for this. When I approached Gwandu the next day to confirm that the outfit we had agreed upon was suitable, he abruptly replied that this was a question to be asking Mama Gwandu and that I should not be asking him about my clothes for church. When it came to training matters, however, Gwandu was eager to discuss scientific training principles with me, regularly asking for my advice and opinion on the girls' training schedules.

Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's reliance on the church reinforces the fact that their roles in the camp encompassed more than solely training the girls to become athletes. In line with Gwandu's emphasis that the camp was "like a family", he and Mama Gwandu understood their roles in the camp as being more like the girls' parents than like their coaches. This distinction is critical to gaining deeper insight into both Gwandu's relationship with his athletes, and his rationale for changing from recruiting boys to recruiting girls. Malkia Mohammed was the first girl recruited to Team 100, arriving in Arusha in 1998. Unlike the Iraqw male athletes living in the camp at the time, Malkia was Nyaturu, born in Kinyetto, the same village as Mama Gwandu, where their families had been close neighbours.

Malkia came to Arusha with what Gwandu describes as a hard working and "very disciplined" attitude, which meant she immediately started producing impressive results. Around this time, Gwandu recalls having had problems with the male athletes living in the camp because they were "difficult" and often broke the rules he set for them. The immediate connection Gwandu made between Malkia's discipline – which contrasted so sharply with the boys' attitudes – and her results, influenced Gwandu to recruit more girls like her. Mama Gwandu supported this idea because she felt Nyaturu girls needed more help to improve their lives than Iraqw boys. By 2000, three

girls lived in Team 100 and, until recently, Gwandu housed a total of 34 female athletes onsite<sup>30</sup>.

### **Athletes as Wealth**

While a number of ethnographic texts have been produced about the Iraqw – the most current of which is the work of anthropologist Katherine Snyder (1999; 2001; 2002; 2005; 2006) – the Nyaturu are more neglected in this regard, again reflecting the isolation of the Singida region in which most Nyaturu live. The most renowned Nyaturu ethnography is that written by Harold Schneider in 1970, in which Nyaturu conceptions of ownership and property feature prominently. Schneider argues that the concept of ownership extends beyond the ownership of resources and goods to include people and the labour they produce, so that people are thought of as both social beings and as forms of property (1970: 104). Wealth can, therefore, be accumulated through the ownership of property and other valued goods and resources such as cattle, but it can also be accumulated through the ownership of people. Schneider refers to this as “people as wealth” (1970: 104).

People are ‘owned’ in different ways depending on their status. Children, for example, are not considered complete social beings until they are initiated into adulthood, which makes it possible to own and sell rights to children legitimately. Schneider argues this is illustrated by the fact that children were occasionally bought and sold as slaves in the past (1970: 104). Once a person has been initiated into adulthood and is recognised as complete social being, it is considered morally wrong to alienate them from their corporeal rights in this way. Schneider emphasises this important difference between the ownership of adults and that of children, stressing that it is not the ownership of adults themselves that brings wealth, but rather the ownership of, and control over, rights to their labour (1970: 117). Gender similarly affects ownership rights among the Nyaturu in that only adult men are inherently allowed to own property, resources, and the rights to people’s labour.

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<sup>30</sup> Gwandu explains the recent sudden drop in the number of girls living in Team 100 by saying he received pressure from Karl to invest his limited resources more efficiently into training fewer athletes. Incidentally, this enabled Gwandu to rent out rooms in the camp no longer needed by the girls, which provides him with an additional source of income for the camp.

Historically, young Nyaturu girls began the process of transformation into adult women with clitoridectomy, which was carried out around the age of ten and after which time girls were considered eligible for marriage. Boys similarly became eligible for marriage following circumcision, which occurred around 12 to 15 years of age. A father was, therefore, considered to own his children until clitoridectomy and circumcision, after which time he could own only rights to his daughters' productive and reproductive labour. In marking initiation into male adulthood, circumcision also marked the end of a father's ownership of his sons, and the beginning of their own rights to property ownership.

Schneider writes that similar notions of ownership also apply to cattle – historically one of the resources most highly valued by Nyaturu – in the sense that only rights to the productive labour of cattle are controlled and owned, rather than cattle themselves. The value of a cow is therefore measured by its productivity, in the amount of milk it produces or calves that it bears, and it is because such items have value that owning rights in cattle brings wealth. The concept of “people as wealth” (Schneider, 1970: 104) thus makes sense because of the high value placed on a woman's productivity, measured by her domestic labour and the offspring she produces. A woman's reproductive labour is particularly valued because of the wealth that owning children engenders.

In addition to the similarities between the ownership of cattle and the ownership of rights in people, cattle and women are also of comparable value and are, consequently, interchangeable resources. This idea is best illustrated by the exchange involved in Nyaturu marriage. Marriage transactions effectively consist of a transfer in rights to an adult woman's labour from her father to another adult male who becomes her husband. In exchange for this transfer in rights, the woman's future husband makes bridewealth payments to her father. Historically, bridewealth payments always consisted of cattle, meaning that a marriage transaction consisted of exchanging rights in a woman's labour for rights in the labour of cattle.

As the perceived value of money has increased relative to the value of cattle's labour – particularly in urban economies, in which cattle play a less significant role than wage labour – money has begun to replace cattle in bridewealth payments. Drawing

on her fieldwork among the Mende of Sierra Leone, Bledsoe (2005: 81) shows that marriage transactions involving cattle have been practiced in numerous African societies in the past, and that the trend of replacing cattle with money in bridewealth payments is also widespread throughout Africa. Bledsoe argues that it is increasingly the bridewealth transaction itself that transfers “legal rights in an African woman’s labour and sexual reproductive services from her natal lineage to that of her husband” (2005: 81), rather than the symbolic use of cattle in the exchange of one form of labour for another.

The idea of accumulating wealth through ownership of, and control over, rights to people’s labour continues to be relevant in urban Tanzania today, and it is through this concept that Gwandu’s decision to change from training boys to training girls can be understood. In constructing his role as that of ‘father’ to the girls, Gwandu legitimates his control and ownership of the products of their labour, which, in the case of a successful running career, is the money athletes earn from running. In his role as father, Gwandu’s ownership rights are affected by both age and gender in such a way that it is more viable for him to recruit either runners who are still considered children, or females whose labour he is able to control until marriage.

Gwandu explained that the amount of financial support Team 100 received from ‘A Running Start’ was approximately enough to cover food expenses, and money from rent approximately covered things such as clothing and medical bills. Accordingly, Gwandu relied on the small amount of money generated by the athletes’ incomes to cover unexpected extra expenses such as travel to events and race entry fees. Gwandu’s role as the girls’ father helped to normalise his reliance on their race earnings to run the camp in a way that would not have been possible with adult male athletes, whose labour cannot be legitimately controlled in the same way. The fact that the ‘father’ role does not enable Gwandu to lay claims to adult male athletes’ income can be used to explain the difficulties he experienced when training boys.

Both the boys’ lack of discipline compared to Malkia and their breaking of camp rules can be explained in terms of their resistance to Gwandu’s attempts to control their income. Gwandu, however, explains Malkia’s discipline by what he perceives to be attitude differences between boys and girls in Tanzania, arguing that girls are

generally “raised to be more disciplined and obedient” than boys. There were numerous differences in the attitudes of male and female athletes that made females easier to coach, Gwandu explained, particularly Nyaturu females, who were more committed to working for the success of their running careers because they had fewer options for alternative career paths to follow.

Gwandu suggested that, as boys were more likely to have secondary school education than girls, for example, they were more likely to find employment in urban centres such as Arusha. Whereas the girls of Team 100 told me they aspired to earn money through having a successful running career, all male athletes I spoke to in Arusha said they aspired towards maximising their income by juggling a successful running career with another job simultaneously. A number of young men I encountered also owned, or aspired to own, farms in rural villages, and asserted they would willingly travel between rural and urban areas regularly if they were able to earn some income from farming in a village. Gwandu suggested that, because girls such as those training with Team 100 were opposed to the idea of returning to rural villages, they were more committed to living in the city than male athletes, particularly those who were focussed on maximising their earnings.

Similarly, Gwandu argued that training to have a successful running career was not possible while working in another job simultaneously, in the same way as it was not possible to study and train successfully. Gwandu often pointed out athletes who attempted to juggle both work and running, describing them as “lazy” in their training because they were less committed to it than athletes for whom it was their sole focus. John Bayo, another coach living and working in Arusha, further argued that male athletes’ attitudes were affected by the fact that they earned significantly more money than women, both when they performed well in important races internationally as well as when they worked as pacemakers.

According to John, an average salary for a labouring or manual job in Tanzania was around US \$2000 per year. At the time of my visit to Team 100, Malkia had earned more than any other athlete Gwandu had ever trained, and one of the highest sums

ever earned by a Tanzanian female athlete. Her best season had been in 2005 when she had placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the 5000 meter event at the Helsinki IAAF<sup>31</sup> World Track Championships, and had earned approximately US \$30 000. By comparison, successful Tanzanian male athletes earned an average of US \$75 000 per year, according to John, equivalent to around 37 years' work in a labouring job.

John and Gwandu argued that this was enough money to “drive a person crazy”, and that it often did. The expensive vehicles many successful male athletes drove around Arusha were one of the most visible signs they had been driven “crazy” by their money, according to these coaches, particularly as the athletes who owned these vehicles seldom had the opportunity to drive them (see Figure 8). Although male athletes earned more and could theoretically provide more income than female athletes for camps such as Team 100, Gwandu perceived males' income as more difficult to access because they were more often driven “crazy” by the larger sums of money they earned. Males were also harder to train because of their attitudes.



**Figure 8:** Vehicles owned by some of Tanzania's most successful male athletes.

Gwandu claimed the owner of this vehicle drove his car only to attend training sessions in the Arusha stadium, although he lived close by. (*Source: author's collection*)

Although Gwandu rationalised his decision to train Nyaturu females in this way, John nevertheless told me he could not understand how Gwandu was able to financially manage the camp with 14 girls. John housed one female athlete with his family in his

<sup>31</sup> International Association of Athletics Federations

own home, which he described as very difficult given the meagre amounts of money she was able to earn in races. Like most of the other coaches in Arusha, John was Iraqw, and he also expressed perplexity at the fact that Gwandu coached Nyaturu girls despite the fact that he was Iraqw himself. According to John and other Iraqw coaches, the Iraqw possessed unique characteristics – argued to have evolved from the unique environment of the Iraqw homeland of *Mama Issara* – that lead them to have a “natural talent” for running. As one young Iraqw male athlete in Arusha explained:

*“Where we lived is much higher up than many other tribes, and this is good for our lungs... you know, it makes them stronger. This is also good for running.... And also, it was cold there! In the hut we slept up high, the bed was right above the fireplace.... There was so much smoke... it was difficult to sleep this way. But we had to sleep like that because it was so cold: If you left a cup of water outside in the night, the next day it would be frozen ...! This cold is also good for the lungs and for running”*

Although the idea that Iraqw possessed a ‘natural’ running talent was widely held among athletes in Arusha, including those who were not Iraqw themselves, Gwandu and Mama Gwandu both dismissed the idea that ethnicity could be used to explain running ability. Supported by her own running success despite being Nyaturu, Mama Gwandu argued that, in Tanzania, ethnicity was “*hamna*<sup>32</sup>” and could not account for differences between people. Likewise, Gwandu insisted that all Team 100 athletes did, in fact, possess a natural talent for running, and he made this a precondition to their selection for the camp along with having finished primary school and having failed the leaving exam.

### **‘Natural’ Talent and Gender**

Gwandu felt that possessing natural running talent dramatically increased a runner’s chances of success in international competition, and he conceptualised this kind of talent as something an individual was born with. Talent needed to be properly trained in order to develop a successful running career from it, meaning that a person could be born with a natural running talent but not necessarily succeed in running. This inherent quality nevertheless remained with them for life, regardless of how it was

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<sup>32</sup> Nothing.

utilised. Influenced by his own experiences in America, Gwandu argued that the fact any Tanzanian could possess an inherent talent for running was what differentiated Tanzanians from “White” athletes, making them fundamentally different.

Recognising individuals born with natural talent was something Gwandu argued could not be learned, and required the specialised skill of a talent scout. To enlist the help of the two coaches he had working as talent scouts for him at the time of my fieldwork, Gwandu had travelled to Singida town in the late 1990s to attend races being held in the small Singida stadium. There, Gwandu had been approached by *Mwalimu*<sup>33</sup> Jambau, a retired athlete who remembered Gwandu’s participation in the 1984 Olympic Games and had heard through word of mouth that he had opened a training camp in Arusha. *Mwalimu* Jambau was living and teaching in Mampando primary school in the village of Lighwa, approximately a three-hour drive from Singida town, and Gwandu negotiated a deal that made him the first recruiter for Team 100. Noticing many of the runners racing in the Singida races were children from Kisaki village – located at a 15-minute drive east of Singida – Gwandu then approached *Mwalimu* Massong, the headmaster of the only school in Kisaki, and asked him to become the second talent scout for his camp.

Gwandu explained that it was difficult to define the specific characteristics *Mwalimu* Massong and *Mwalimu* Jambau looked for to identify athletes who possessed natural talent, because it could manifest itself in a number of ways. While Gwandu generally referred to race results and running speed as good indicators of a male runner’s inherent ability, these factors did not necessarily indicate running talent for girls, and all Team 100 athletes had been selected based on characteristics such as their running stride and body shape, including leg length, musculature, height and weight. Attitude also played an important role in identifying girls with running ability, a point Gwandu made by arguing that Mama Gwandu’s natural talent had manifested itself in the fact she was the only child in her village motivated enough to run home from school each day for the midday meal.

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<sup>33</sup> The Swahili word for ‘teacher’.



By contrast, accentuating the idea that boys' running talent was quantifiable in their results and performance, Gwandu described his own natural running ability as having been manifested in his selection for the 1984 Olympic Games, despite having received little formal training. For Gwandu and Mama Gwandu, natural talent thus manifested itself differently according to gender, rather than ethnicity, and this reflected wider differences in the meaning and value of running for males and females. Given their higher average educational attainment than girls, opportunities such as American university athletic scholarships were more closely associated with male runners than with females.

The ability to run specific qualifying times across specific distances was more of a male concern than a female one (see Figure 9), and female athletes in Arusha were seldom described in terms of the results and times they had achieved, although this was a common way of describing male athletes. The greater ambiguity surrounding the identification of natural talent for girls also made it more likely to mistakenly identify a female as having inherent ability than to wrongly identify male talent. Gwandu gave a number of examples of girls he had had to discontinue coaching because he felt they did not possess natural running talent despite having been selected by one of his talent scouts.



**Figure 9:** Male athletes aggressively competing against each other to achieve the fastest time during a training exercise at the Arusha stadium.

*(Source: author's collection)*

In the way he recruited athletes for Team 100, Gwandu relied heavily on *Mwalimu* Massong and *Mwalimu* Jambau to ensure the conditions of having failed the primary school leaving exam and possessing natural talent were met. While in some cases it quickly became evident that these conditions had not been met, as the mistaken identification of natural talent illustrates, in other cases this lapse was subtler. A number of the girls living in Team 100 at the time of my visit had been recruited on the assumption that they would fail the primary school leaving exam, for example, having left Singida before receiving official confirmation of their exam results<sup>34</sup>.

The idea that the girls had no better options than to train with Team 100 if they failed primary school was also an assumption made by Gwandu and Mama Gwandu. A number of the girls indicated to me that they had been planning to leave the village in search of work as seamstresses in Singida town or Arusha after finishing primary school, and some insisted that they would rather be employed as seamstresses than pursue a running career, despite the fact that running had the potential to be more lucrative.

The girls' ambitions are discussed in more detail in the following chapter. Using Schneider's (1970) description of the transitions between age grades among the Nyaturu, these ambitions are framed by the idea of making the transition into adult womanhood in Arusha and securing a permanent residence in the city. Life in the Team 100 camp is discussed in terms of a process of transformation, restricted by taboos similar to those imposed on rural Nyaturu girls during their transition into adulthood.

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<sup>34</sup> A young girl named Hawa, who had been living in Team 100 for less than a year, for example, had received her 'fail' grade after having already moved to Arusha. Concerned by the speed with which the decision to send her to Arusha had been taken, Hawa's father spoke to me about his desire to send Hawa to a private secondary school in Arusha, where it was possible to go despite having failed the primary school exam. When I told him of these concerns Gwandu asserted Hawa's father would surely not be able to afford the fees for a private secondary school, and that there was no better option for Hawa than to live in Arusha with Team 100.

## Chapter 4:

# Running to Escape Village Life

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Gwandu resisted Karl's vision of developing and empowering Team 100 athletes through university education in favour of his own goal of improving their lives and, in the same way, the girls also resisted aspects of Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's control when this contradicted the aspirations they held for their own lives and running careers. This chapter details some of the tensions and ambiguities that arise from the discrepancies between Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's vision and that of the girls. I suggest Gwandu attempts to control some of the ambiguities that arise from their different aspirations by enforcing a number of taboos on the girls living in the camp.

Drawing on the idea that one of the functions of the camp was to facilitate the girls' transition into adult womanhood, the taboos Gwandu enforces in the camp are compared to those enforced during Nyaturu rites of transition into adult womanhood, as described by Harold Schneider (1970). Particular emphasis is placed on the similarities between life in the camp and the Nyaturu menstruation seclusion rite known as 'House *Imaa*'. Emphasising the importance of earning money to Gwandu's idea of improving the girls' lives through running, I argue that, for Gwandu, achieving high race results and high earnings are critical for marking the end of the girls' seclusion in the camp and the beginning of their lives as adult women. The empirical material in this chapter is based on my everyday interaction with the girls – which was also influenced by my relationship with Gwandu, insofar as the deep insight I was able to gain into his rationale for each of the taboos he instilled enabled me to observe the girls' resistance in subtle, everyday actions that challenged them.

Following my unsuccessful attempts to find a Nyaturu-English speaking assistant, my participation in, and observation of, the girls' everyday activities increased as I learnt more Swahili and as the girls grew accustomed to Nicky's and my presence in the

camp. Throughout my time with Team 100 Nicky and I conducted interviews with all of the girls, as well as with a small number of female athletes who had been coached by Gwandu but were no longer living on the Team 100 premises. I was also able to interview other male athletes living in Ilboru and, combined with interviews carried out with other coaches and athletic officials living in Arusha, I conducted a total of around 25 semi-structured interviews, ranging from 20 minutes to several hours, or even days, in duration.

As many interviews were undertaken in the noisy camp environment, interference from background noises made it impossible to record these conversations. Recording was also made impractical by the time it took to explain my questions to Nicky in such a way that she understood them and could translate and explain them in Swahili to the person being interviewed, before translating and explaining the answer back to me in English. On a number of occasions, the recording process was further complicated by the person being interviewed requesting the help of other people to answer some of my questions, particularly those related to recalling past events. Such interviews often spanned across several hours or days, because of the time it took to find these people. My main method of recording thus consisted of note taking. This proved to be the most accurate method of recording information exactly as my participants wanted it to be recorded, although it was more time-consuming as a number of interviewees regularly requested to see what I was writing, how I was writing it and, in some cases, asked to write stories and anecdotes down for me themselves. The process of translating and transcribing thoughts into English made it difficult to maintain interview flow at times.

My most successful interviews with the girls occurred after I had been living in the camp for some time and decided to divide the girls into two age-based focus groups. I took each group out of the camp on separate occasions, into the less formal and more relaxed setting of a café in central Arusha. Being together in a group made the older group of girls answer my questions more confidently, as did being outside of the camp, particularly when talking about issues concerning Gwandu or the camp itself. A number of authors have argued for the use of focus groups in this way as a means to improve interview flow and dialogue particularly in cross-cultural research in which translation is required (Agar & MacDonald, 1995; Esposito, 2001).

The younger of the two groups was comprised of girls aged between 12 and 15 who did not express the same level of confidence as the older girls, and did not participate in discussions with me as enthusiastically. To counter this and engage these girls' attention in a specific task, I incorporated drawing into their focus group session, asking them to fill a large sheet of paper with illustrations of their choice, while Nicky and I talked to each of the girls individually about the objects they had chosen to depict and why. Based on her experiences of using drawing in research among children in the central Philippines, Mitchell (2006: 62) supports the use of this technique, arguing it facilitates interviewing children or young adults by redressing or minimising the power imbalances that characterise their interaction with adult researchers.

A recurrent theme in all of the interviews and focus groups sessions I carried out with both groups of girls was their common desire to live in Arusha permanently and not to have to return to the villages. While for Gwandu and Mama Gwandu a successful running career provided unique opportunities to earn the large sums of money they perceived of as critical to improving the girls' lives, the girls themselves perceived their selection for Team 100 as a unique opportunity to migrate to Arusha and escape village life. Running itself and earning money from the sport were secondary to the goals of becoming adult women and establishing themselves permanently in the city.

Of the 14 athletes living in Team 100 at the time of these interviews, one – Emily, who was Iraqw – was from the Mbulu region, in the village of Bassodawish, while the other 13 girls were all from the Singida region. Eight were from Lighwa village and had been selected by *Mwalimu* Jambau, while four of them were from Kisaki, recruited by *Mwalimu* Massong. One of the athletes, named Faidha, was from Kinyetto, the same village Mama Gwandu and Malkia were from, where she had been discovered to have a 'natural' running talent by Malkia's father<sup>35</sup>. After having spent the first two months of my fieldwork in Arusha living in Team 100, I travelled to the Singida and Mbulu regions to carry out fieldwork in Bassodawish, Liwghwa, Kisaki

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<sup>35</sup> Gwandu, however, often complained that Faidha lacked 'natural' talent and the discipline and hard-working attitude that were necessary in order for her to succeed. Malkia's father had not selected other athletes for Team 100, suggesting Faidha's recruitment may have revolved around the settling of obligations or debts involving Faidha's family, Malkia's family and Gwandu.

and Kinyetto. I began with the trip to Bassodawish partly because it was nearer to Arusha and easier to access, and partly because Emily was the only athlete in Team 100 who volunteered to accompany me back to her home village.

Emily and I had shared a room with one other athlete during my time in the camp and, united by our common inability to understand Nyaturu, we had spent more time together in the early days of my fieldwork than I had with the other girls. As well as reflecting subtle differences in the relationship I had with Emily compared to that I shared with the Nyaturu girls, their refusal to accompany me to their natal villages also reflected the strength of these girls' desire never to return to rural areas. In this regard, Emily's willingness to accompany me to Bassodawish also reflected subtle differences in Iraqw and Nyaturu understandings of running.



**Figure 10:** One of the local forms of public transport Emily and I employed on our trip from Arusha to Bassodawish.

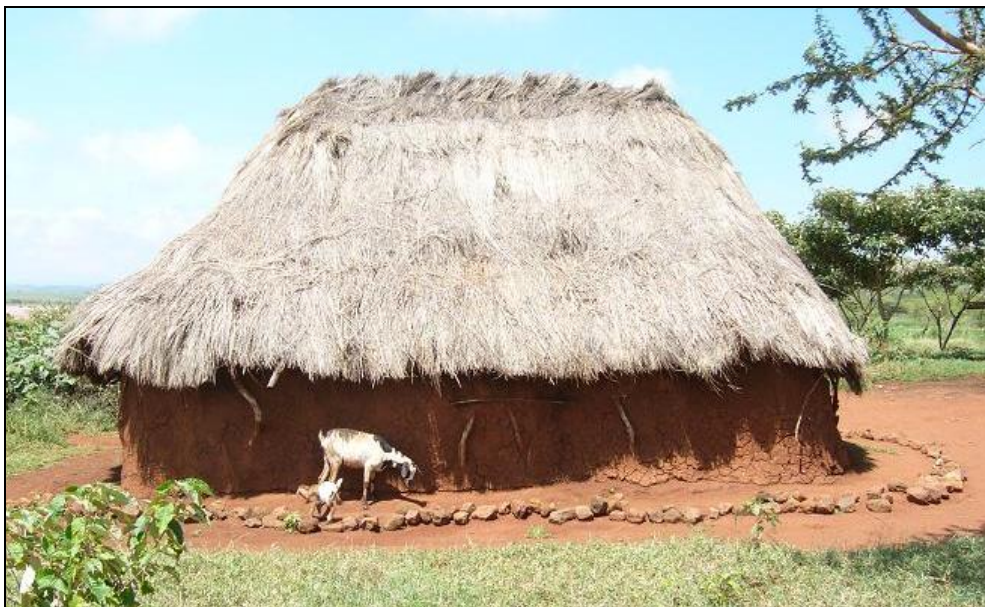
*(Source: author's collection)*

As demonstrated by the differences in training and racing opportunities available to Gwandu and Mama Gwandu as they grew up, running is more popular among the Iraqw than it is among the Nyaturu. Well-known, successful Iraqw athletes such as Filbert Bayi and Gidamis Shahanga have meant running is more strongly associated with wealth and success among the Iraqw than it is among the Nyaturu. Emily's willingness to accompany me home suggests she was confident in her ability to earn



enough money from a successful running career to eventually enable her to settle permanently in the city. The Nyaturu girls' refusal to leave Arusha, on the other hand, suggests running and earning money were not causally linked for them as they were for Emily. This can also help explain why running was secondary, for these girls, to establishing themselves permanently in the city.

The trip from Arusha to Bassodawish took a full day's travel by bus (see Figure 10). Emily's knowledge of the numerous changes we had to negotiate on remote rural bus lines greatly facilitated the journey, as did her presence in the village itself, enabling me to make contacts that would not have been possible without her assistance. In Bassodawish, Emily introduced me to her family, friends, neighbours and primary school teachers (see Figure 11). I learnt that there was not one coach in the Bassodawish primary school like *Mwalimu* Jambau in Lighwa and *Mwalimu* Massong Kisiaki, and that Emily had been introduced to Gwandu by her father, who was also an aspiring runner, and who had himself recommended his daughter to Gwandu for selection for Team 100. Together with other running enthusiasts in Bassodawish, Emily's father organised a number of small races for the local primary school children during my stay in the village, before accompanying me to Mbulu town to show me the house in which Filbert Bayi had been raised. Emily and I then went our separate ways, so that she could return to Arusha and I could carry on to Singida.



**Figure 11:** A hut in Bassodawish village.  
(Source: author's collection)

Upon first arriving in Tanzania at the beginning of my fieldwork, I had visited the University of Dar es Salaam where I had met the Heads of the Anthropology and Physical Education, Sport and Culture Departments, as well as Dr. Yusufu Lawi, a lecturer in the History Department renowned for his in depth historical research on the Iraqw. Dr. Simeon Mesaki, the Head of the Anthropology Department, had offered his assistance should I decide to travel to the Singida region, because his wife was Nyaturu and had family still living in the Singida region. Remembering the difficulties I had encountered trying to find an English-Nyaturu speaking assistant in Arusha, I contacted Dr. Mesaki and, following his recommendation, contacted a young Nyaturu woman named Akila, who lived not far from Singida town and was fluent in English.

Akila worked as a teacher in a small rural primary school and, like Emily, was familiar with rural bus systems and the changes we needed to make to reach Kisaki, Kinyetto and Lighwa. Akila and I were met in Lighwa by Paul, the brother of two athletes training with Team 100 and an aspiring runner himself, who also spoke some English and travelled with Akila and I as my second assistant from that moment on. Paul's involvement in running in Lighwa helped me to make contact with athletics enthusiasts similar to those I had established with Emily in Bassodawish, while Akila, although a stranger to running and to the particular villages we were visiting, brought her own insights and ideas into my fieldwork observations.

Influenced by her teacher training, Akila had clear ideas on what constituted 'research' and how it should be achieved, which involved clearly structuring conversations and interviews around the uncovering of specific facts and information. Although hindering the ability of my interviewees to themselves direct the conversation flow, Akila's determination was also beneficial in certain instances, such as when she arranged for Paul's grandparents to travel from their home several kilometres away, to describe past Nyaturu dance festivals no longer commonly held today. Of her own initiative, Akila also assembled a group of women to re-enact some of the songs and dances no longer used in such festivals, which I had the honour and privilege of having performed for me the following day (see Figure 12).





**Figure 12:** Women performing dances and songs formerly used in Nyaturu festivals.  
*(Source: author's collection)*

With the help of Emily, Akila and Paul, I was able to meet and interview all of the Team 100 athletes' parents, many of their siblings and extended families, as well as individuals who played key roles in the organisation of running in each of the villages I visited. Although Paul aspired to be given the same opportunity as his sisters to pursue a running career in Arusha, Emily was the only athlete in Team 100 whose parents expressed interest and participated in running. Accordingly, few parents discussed the sport of running as having an inherent value in itself, and all focussed instead on the opportunities it had created for their daughters to leave the village, and the money they would be able to send home to help their families once they became urban adult women. The assumption that the girls would earn enough money in the city to be able to help their families living in the villages was not necessarily related to earning money through running, as a number of parents were in fact ambivalent about their daughters' career paths and uninterested in discussing their daughters' progress and running results. All parents expressed concerns about their daughters' well being, most particularly about whether the girls were being well fed in the camp.

### Life in Team 100 as House *Imaa*

Gwandu explained that concerns regarding the girls' food intake were common among all the girls' parents, and that this was one of the only sources of conflict between him and them. A number of the girls' extended family members, friends or other connections they had living in or around Arusha had visited the camp since it had begun to house only female athletes, and Gwandu asserted these individuals had been sent by the girls' parents to ascertain whether the athletes appeared well-fed or too thin. According to Gwandu, the outcome of such visits was almost always that the girls were declared to be too thin and that Gwandu was accused of mistreating them by denying them food. The person sent to check how the girls were being fed – or the girls' parents themselves – had in some cases insisted on removing girls from the camp following such a verdict.

Gwandu argued athletes needed to maintain a low body weight in order to succeed in long distance running, and he specifically described an athletic body as needing to look thin and muscular. For the girls' parents and for a number of people I spoke to who lived near the camp in Ilboru, however, the girls' thinness was associated with sickness and infertility, rather than athleticism. As an *mzee*<sup>36</sup>, after having observed the girls training, asked Gwandu one day:

*“Why are these girls so skinny? This is not natural – look! Running makes them too skinny! They should not run like this... later they will not have children if they continue!”*

Brad Weiss, in his ethnography of the Haya people living in northwestern Tanzania, highlights similar associations between being thin and illness or infertility (1996). Among the Haya, writes Weiss, “to grow fat is, literally, to be healthy” (1996:143) and the perceived relationship between body weight and fertility is such that it is one of the most frequent sources of tension between a newly married male and his father (1996: 141). While it is customary for a newly married Haya couple to live with the husband's father, Weiss argues conflicts commonly arise from the control the father

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<sup>36</sup> Literally meaning respected elder or ancestor, the term *mzee* is also commonly used as a term of respect for a dignified man.

maintains on the distribution of food within his own household, and his ability to restrict the amount of food his son receives. By asserting his control over his son in this way, a father also restricts his son's capacity to feed his wife, and thereby asserts his control over both of their reproductive abilities as well (Weiss, 1996: 141).

Weiss also suggests that gaining weight is one of the most visible signs that a newly married woman is being well cared for and prepared for motherhood (1996: 183). Given these strong associations between body weight and fertility, and the importance of fertility in becoming an adult woman, the girls' parents' concerns with ensuring their daughters were being well fed in Team 100 emphasises the critical point in their lives at which the girls were recruited for the camp. For the girls' parents, their daughters' selection at the end of primary school and the end of their status as students implied that the camp was a site for them to begin their transformation into adult women. The goal of becoming adult women was also important to the girls, as illustrated by the emphasis they placed on establishing themselves permanently as adult women in the city, compared to running and earning money from the sport.

Schneider (1970: 131) describes rites of transition for Nyaturu females to become adult women as longer and more complicated than the brief transition rites for Nyaturu males. The Nyaturu are patrilineal and marry exogamously, meaning Nyaturu village units are formed around descent-based groups of men married to women from outside villages. Men in Nyaturu communities are therefore bound by descent, Schneider argues, whereas the bonds between women revolved around gender and their commonalities as adult women. Schneider writes that, as a result of these differences, the transition out of childhood for a girl requires a period of seclusion known as house *Imaa*, during which she is taught about "women's ways" by older women (Schneider, 1970: 135). Similar periods of seclusion at the onset of menstruation have also been noted among Gogo women in central Tanzania (Rigby, 1967).

Historically, Nyaturu house *Imaa* seclusion began at the onset of menstruation and could last for up to a year. In teaching girls about the meaning of womanhood and the social expectations of their new roles as adults, house *Imaa* prepared girls to assume the roles of adult women through marriage and motherhood. Accordingly, a critical

function of the seclusion period was to “fatten the initiate to make her more beautiful” and to increase her fertility (Schneider, 1970: 135).

Many of the girls’ parents confirmed that larger women were considered more beautiful, as well as more fertile, than thinner women. Thinness, one of the girls’ mothers argued to me, was something *wazungu*<sup>37</sup> found beautiful, and thin women in Tanzania were described as having an “English figure”. In addition to creating concern for their fertility, the thin bodies of the girls training with Team 100 thus also worried their parents because they suspected their daughters of attempting to make themselves sexually attractive to *wazungu* in Arusha. According to Gwandu, the parents of several girls had also removed their daughters from Team 100 after having accused Gwandu of running a brothel for *mzungu*<sup>38</sup> tourists in Ilboru. Gwandu dismissed these accusations but explained these parents had been convinced by the fact that Arusha had a high *wazungu* tourist population and the fact that Gwandu himself continued to strongly insist the girls needed to be thin, thus fulfilling the role of a pimp in their eyes.

The parents’ suspicions reflect a discourse Liv Haram (2004) argues is widespread throughout Tanzania. Based on her own research among Meru people living in Arusha, Haram suggests women living in urban areas – particularly unmarried women – are often associated with prostitution, because of the short-term, transient nature of relationships more common in cities (Haram, 2004: 211). The girls’ parents’ desire to control their daughters’ sexual behaviour also reflects the strong taboos surrounding initiates’ interaction with men, that are another important aspect of house *Imaa* seclusion. Schneider writes that, during seclusion, it was important for initiates to remain inside the house, physically removed from the presence of men at all times, because they were considered unclean and in a “ritually unbalanced state” (Schneider, 1970: 135-136). This ritual imbalance came from the fact that the adult initiation process for women began with clitoridectomy, which was performed around the age of ten on prepubescent girls unable to bear children, and thus unable to properly fulfil their roles as adult women.

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<sup>37</sup> Plural of *mzungu*, which is the Swahili word for European, American or ‘White’ person.

<sup>38</sup> Swahili word for European, American, or ‘White’ person.

While male circumcision marking boys' initiation into adulthood was typically a public event that involved community-wide celebrations and festivities, female clitoridectomy was shrouded in secrecy and carried out in the privacy of the home, where it was concealed from men (Schneider, 1970: 132). A number of taboos restricted girls' interaction with men from clitoridectomy until *Imaa* seclusion, during which time girls were forbidden all interaction with men while they were instructed in "women's ways" (1970: 135). At the end of house *Imaa*, Schneider writes that cleansing rituals restored the balance required for initiates to assume the status of adult women, and the taboos restricting their interaction with men were lifted (1970: 132).

Ironically, given the parents' concerns for and desire to control their daughters' sexual conduct, Gwandu and Mama Gwandu also argued that it was essential to limit the girls' interaction with men while they lived in Team 100. This was one way in which life in Team 100 closely resembled life for initiates during house *Imaa*, although Gwandu's rationale for enforcing taboos on the girls' behaviour centred around ideas of them being in a liminal process of becoming athletes, rather than in a liminal phase between childhood and adulthood. During my time in the camp Gwandu frequently expressed concern at the fact that, since the founding of Team 100, a number of athletes had given up pursuing running careers after failing to produce high results. The fact that this trend had increased as the camp had shifted from training boys to training girls particularly worried Gwandu, who had begun to conceive of the lengthy, economically unproductive training period required to succeed in running as a highly ambiguous time for athletes.

In addition to being economically unproductive and associated with childhood, Gwandu conveyed that the training period was ambiguous because an individual could not legitimately claim the status of athlete without high results and high race earnings to confirm this identity. Like the ritual imbalance between clitoridectomy and the end of house *Imaa*, an individual's status was, therefore, liminal and ambiguous throughout the training process. Gwandu described athletes who had given up running as having been "corrupted", and argued that the chances of 'corruption' were particularly high during this liminal phase. Gwandu also argued that the chances

of ‘corruption’ were higher in the city than they were in the villages, and that this was why – contrary to Max Iraghe and the Tanzania Sports Academy – he strove to create what he described as a “simple” way of life in the camp, similar to “life in the villages”. Gwandu’s distinction between city and village life reflects Ferguson’s distinction between cosmopolitan and localist cultural styles (1999: 86). This suggests that the style Gwandu strove to maintain in Team 100, in order to prevent the corruption of his athletes, resembled what he perceived as a localist style, whereas Max Iraghe conveyed a cosmopolitan cultural style Gwandu disapproved of.

Men were a major source of corruption because relationships with men could lead to pregnancy or marriage, both of which Gwandu conceived of as signalling the end of a girls’ running career. According to Gwandu, the dangers of interacting with men were greater in the city than in the villages, and Haram (2004: 211) notes similar views among the Meru, who associate women’s migration to urban centres with the loss of social codes that regulate their moral behaviour in the village setting. As a result of stereotypes Meru also hold about “the good ‘rural ways’ and the bad ‘urban ways’ of life”, Haram argues, urban women are more often associated with immoral and inappropriate sexual conduct than rural women. Johnson-Hanks notes a similar association between urban life and women’s inappropriate sexual conduct made by Beti women in Cameroon (2006)

Gwandu was able to control what he perceived as the risk of corruption from men in the city by enforcing taboos on the girls similar to those enforced during house *Imaa*. Mama Gwandu and Gwandu forbade the girls to interact with men outside of the camp, and girls who transgressed this rule or were suspected of having done so, were immediately expelled from the camp. Gwandu listed a number of examples of girls who had been expelled in this way, including girls whose alleged relationships with men had not been proved, and girls whose relationships had led neither to pregnancy nor to marriage. Although the transfer of rights to a woman through marriage implies that a man must financially provide for his wife and her offspring, in exchange for rights to her productive and reproductive labour, a number of authors have argued that women throughout Africa are increasingly using their sexuality to negotiate financial support from men in illegitimate relationships outside of marriage.

Bledsoe (2005) argues pursuing such illegitimate relationships is a common strategy used by young Mende women in Sierra Leone to obtain money needed for school fees, for example, while Haram (2004) suggests single Meru mothers use similar strategies to support themselves and their children in Arusha. Based on research in Kenya, Bujra (2005) traces a trend of newly urbanised women using their sexuality in exchange for financial support in this way in Nairobi. Likewise, Mills and Ssewakiryanga (2005) argue single Kampalan male students perceive money as a determining factor in their ability to engage in sexual relationships with girls, a perspective also observed by Lindsay (2005, 2007) among Nigerian males.

None of the girls indicated to me that they intended to marry or pursue illegitimate relationships in order to secure financial support in Arusha. The widespread nature of such relationships and Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's concern with forbidding all interaction with men, however, suggests this was one possible strategy that would have enabled the girls to fulfil their goals of settling permanently in the city, without having to pursue a running career. Gwandu's role in the camp legitimated the taboos he imposed surrounding the girls' interaction with men because, as their father, he was entitled to control their reproductive labour. If an athlete was "corrupted" by marriage before achieving a successful running career, Gwandu lost rights to her productive and reproductive labour, along with any potential income she may have provided for the camp.

Gwandu's role as father did not afford him the same control over the girls' bodies as he had over their productive and reproductive labour because, as pointed out by Schneider (1970: 115), it is morally unacceptable to alienate persons from their corporeal rights. This caused a significant problem for Gwandu, because he considered the girls' bodies to be one of the most important factors in determining the success or failure of their running careers, as well as being one of the most frequent sites of 'corruption'.

Gwandu argued that if girls gained weight they simply could not run and he attempted to limit the girls' food intake by enforcing food taboos, particularly surrounding what he described as "city foods". In keeping with Gwandu's idea of a "simple village diet", the girls ate predominantly boiled plantain, beans and rice. The staple food in

the camp consisted of a stiff cornmeal porridge known as *ugali*, which is widely consumed in rural areas throughout East Africa as a whole. Gwandu claimed *ugali* was ideal for athletes and often related East African running success to the consumption of *ugali*. Well-known Tanzanian athletes such as Filbert Bayi<sup>39</sup> had been successful because of the exceptional quality and quantity of *ugali* they had consumed during the training period, according to Gwandu.

In contrast to the simplicity of village foods, Gwandu felt that the variety and volume of foods available in the city were inconducive to maintaining a low body weight, particularly processed foods such as white bread and Blue Brand<sup>40</sup>. Gwandu attempted to prevent the girls from consuming city foods by giving them only small amounts of money for food, with which they could purchase only basic items such as rice, beans and plantain, and by supervising what the girls ate at meal times. Despite his best efforts to control the girls' eating, however, Gwandu was distressed to find that some girls continued to gain weight. Gwandu regularly pointed out girls he felt were overweight to me during training:

*“Look! [sounding very distressed]... come and see... Phelomena, she is a very big talent – but look! She has put on weight! .... And she has only been here since October [less than a year]... I don't know why, if she continues we will lose her! ... We use only very little oil in the cooking... I don't understand. The girls have talent for running, but they must lose weight or they are finished!”*

Gwandu's concerns and confusion about Phelomena and other athletes' weight gain reflects the agency the girls were able to exert in terms of eating the city foods Gwandu disapproved of, without his knowing. Like the boys previously trained in Team 100, the girls' resistance to Gwandu's food restrictions also reflects the illegitimacy of his attempts to control them in this instance. Although Gwandu supervised the foods the girls ate at mealtimes, he never went into the cooking area of the camp in which food preparation took place, and nor was he able to supervise the girls' food consumption outside of mealtimes. I observed the girls using a number of

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<sup>39</sup> Filbert Bayi's grandmother is widely reputed among Iraqw runners to make the best *ugali* in the entire Karatu district in which Bayi was born and raised. I was fortunate enough to be able to meet Filbert Bayi's grandmother and to taste her *ugali*, which was indeed more refined than any other *ugali* I ate while in Tanzania.

<sup>40</sup> A particular brand of margarine widely consumed in Arusha.



methods to obtain illicit foods without Gwandu's knowledge. One of these was extra oil for cooking, which the girls obtained from Buyu, the housegirl employed by Mama Gwandu and Gwandu who lived in the camp. Gwandu gave Buyu a daily allowance with which to buy food to prepare his and Mama Gwandu's meals. With this, he instructed her to buy foods he enjoyed eating, such as meat, white bread, "Blue Brand" and other items he prohibited for the athletes.

Buyu always ate what was left after Gwandu and Mama Gwandu had finished their meals. This meant she seldom enjoyed foods they did not eat themselves, such as the sweet fruit they encouraged the athletes to eat because they were low in fat. I spent most afternoons in the cooking area helping to prepare meals, and observed that while Buyu enjoyed sweet fruit as frequently as did the athletes, the girls were never short of oil, sugar and other items purchased for Gwandu and Mama Gwandu by Buyu. During my time in the camp I was also able to observe an exchange network with athletes from the Tanzania Sports Academy, which involved transactions with clothing as well as with food. Some Team 100 girls also regularly obtained chewing gum, sweets and biscuits, although I was unable to trace the source of these treats. A third method I observed the girls using to obtain prohibited food did not involve exchange, and occurred while I was walking back to the camp alone with two athletes after a training session in the Arusha stadium. Instead of walking along the Ilboru main road directly to the camp, the girls detoured through a neighbour's garden in which large avocados had dropped to the ground from their trees. The girls collected several of these and took them home to share with the other girls.

### **The Athletic Body**

Despite the girls' resistance to the food restrictions Gwandu attempted to impose on them and his fears that some girls were overweight, all the girls training in Team 100 had noticeably thin, muscular bodies that were unusual compared to those of other women living in Ilboru and around Arusha. Gwandu praised Niara, who at 21 was the oldest athlete in Team 100, for being the thinnest and most muscular girl in the camp. According to Gwandu, Niara had the "ideal" athletic body. Although Gwandu suggested this was because she had been training for longer than the other girls, Niara

herself expressed that having a thin and muscular body was something towards which she aspired and deliberately worked to achieve:

*“If you are big you cannot move easily... you are slow [giggles] ... and when you walk with a boy people think you are his mother you know? Because you are so big, you are like the boy’s mother.... But when your body is strong [flexes bicep to demonstrate ‘strong’ body] you are powerful... you are fast and you can move.... This is good.... And it looks good and I think men like this now”.*

Niara’s comportment in everyday situations suggested that she was proud to have the most athletic looking body in the camp. The only context in which any of the girls showed their legs in public was during the most demanding training sessions Gwandu planned for them, which required they run in short and sleeveless tops. The rest of the time the girls took extreme care that their legs remained completely covered in public, particularly in front of men, by training in tracksuits and wearing long skirts outside of training.



**Figure 13:** Girls training in Ilboru.

Niara is in the green shorts and yellow singlet on the far right of the photo. This was her favorite picture because the muscles in her leg were so clearly visible in it. (Source: author’s collection)

The girls all remained similarly modest in the privacy of their bedrooms, except for Niara, who frequently wore only underwear while in the room I shared with her and Emily. While in her underwear, Niara often flexed and examined her muscles from various angles and compared herself to athletes in magazine photos Gwandu had given her for this purpose. Niara encouraged me to take similar photos of her during training sessions in which her legs were visible and, once developed, she eagerly added these photos to the pile she frequently pulled out to scrutinise (see Figure 13).

One day, rather than an action shot of her running, Niara requested I photograph her wearing her favourite running t-shirt but posing in the bedroom (see Figure 14). This was the first photo I had of a Team 100 athlete wearing training clothes that was not an action shot taken during training. Niara examined this posed image through the camera screen as closely as she had done with the training photos of herself I had given her but, given the photo was of only her head and shoulders, she was not able to point out or comment on her musculature as she had in training photos. Instead, Niara pointed to her stern, unsmiling face before proudly asserting “Niara! Strong like a man!”. Although none of the girls’ parents mentioned their daughter’s appearance was masculine, Niara’s reaction suggests that an association between strength, muscularity and masculinity accentuated the existing ambiguity surrounding the girls’ fertility and their thinness. Once developed, however, the photo became one Niara showed off to others with equal pride and satisfaction as the training shots in which her muscular legs were visible.

Niara’s photo-posing session in the bedroom quickly attracted the attention of the other girls, who crowded into our room requesting that I also take posed photos of them. The various objects the girls requested I photograph them with provided a unique opportunity for me to gain insights into how the girls wished to portray themselves. Given that there were no mirrors in the camp or any other way for the girls to view their own bodies, their reactions upon viewing photos of themselves also enabled me to gain insights into how the girls perceived themselves.



**Figure 14:** Niara looking “strong like a man”.  
(Source: author’s collection)

One of the most common requests was to be photographed holding my mobile phone, for example, which was an object none of the girls knew how to use and appeared self-conscious about posing with (see Figure 15). While the girls all teased and laughed at each other when posing with the phone, these photos of themselves were subsequently the ones the girls were the most proud of, and I regularly noticed girls pulling out their own mobile phone photo to scrutinise and discuss it with other girls.



**Figure 15:** Reheema posing with mobile phone.  
(Source: author’s collection)

Mobile phones – along with televisions and cars – were another item Gwandu considered luxurious and extravagant, and one he also accused Max Iraghe of buying for athletes living in the Tanzania Sports Academy. The girls’ desire to pose with objects such as phones suggests that they did not share Gwandu’s dislike and disapproval of them, and demonstrates another way in which their visions and aspirations differed from his. By contrast, Niara’s reaction to the photo in which she saw herself as “strong like a man” was unique in emphasising strong similarities between hers and Gwandu’s views. Strength was also a characteristic Gwandu perceived of as an important marker of an athletic body and, like muscularity and thinness, was a trait he attempted to foster through the girls’ training. Niara’s reaction suggests that, although she associated the strength she saw in herself with masculinity, she nevertheless considered this to be a desirable characteristic because it emphasised her ideal athletic body in similar ways as did her visible musculature in the photos of her training.

Through commenting on photos of themselves in this way, the girls highlighted differences in the degree to which they resisted Gwandu and, accordingly, variations in their individual goals and aspirations for their lives. The fact that Niara resisted Gwandu less than did the younger girls suggests her own aspirations were more in line with the ones he had for her. Combined with the age-based focus group interviews I carried out with the girls, the photo sessions highlighted that, in general, the girls’ resistance to Gwandu’s control lessened as they got older and nearer to the end of their time in the camp. Although Niara and the older girls continued to prioritise the goal of becoming adult women in the city over that of becoming athletes, their increased compliance to characteristics Gwandu asserted would help them become successful athletes suggests that, like Gwandu, they had begun to conceive of becoming an athlete as preceding the transformation into adult women.

As well as being the oldest athlete in the camp and having the most ideal athletic body, Niara also consistently achieved the highest results of any Team 100 athlete in local races. Gwandu described Niara’s potential to earn a large amount of money from running as being “very close” and coming “very, very soon”. Mama Gwandu argued that once she had earned this money Niara would leave Team 100 by building herself

her own home in Arusha, and become an adult woman by marrying and having children. Given her age – which a number of male athletes in Arusha described to me as “already too old” to get married – there was high pressure on Niara to train and perform well given that the only way she could leave the camp and achieve her own goal of becoming an urban, adult woman, was through achieving high race results or, alternatively, through some form of ‘corruption’.

In confirming an individual’s athlete identity, high race results and earnings thus marked the end of life in Team 100 and, as at the end of house *Imaa*, the integration into society as an adult. The following chapter describes the different stages in the process of transforming into athletes and adult women that the girls in Team 100 were in at the time of my visit. The transformation process itself is also described in more detail and Malkia, the first girl recruited for Team 100 and the girl who had earned the most money from running of any other athlete, is described as enacting a cosmopolitan style the older Team 100 athletes aspire to emulate. As well as highlighting their resistance to Gwandu’s dislike for luxurious items, the girls’ desire to pose with my mobile phone also highlights the significance of such commodities for enacting the style they associate with urban womanhood, and the urban women they wish to become. I argue that Malkia’s cosmopolitanism is partly enacted in this way, through particular commodities and forms of consumption.

## Chapter 5:

# The Transformation Process

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For older girls like Niara, who had avoided ‘corruption’ and had trained as part of Team 100 for a number of years, a successful running career seemed an attainable means of earning money and achieving the goal of becoming an urban woman. Although the girls arrived in the camp driven by goals that differed to those of Gwandu and Mama Gwandu, overlap between these goals eventually occurred, at least insofar as they all conceived of achieving high running results as critical to ending the liminal transition period that was life in the camp. In Gwandu and Mama Gwandu’s eyes, Malkia was the only athlete to have as yet successfully improved her life through running, although Gwandu often pointed to Malkia as one of the athletes he feared was gaining weight and would soon “be finished” with running as a result. Gwandu indicated that he felt Malkia had become lazier since she had earned money from running, and I noted a number of instances in which Malkia appeared to lack motivation during training or in races.

One such example was during the 2007 Cross-Country World Championship event in Mombassa. Prior to this event, Gwandu had described Malkia as a likely medal prospect and as Tanzania’s best female athlete in this distance. However, Malkia was beaten by Niara in the race, and finished in 23<sup>rd</sup> place overall. She explained her disappointing result to Gwandu by saying that she had been unwell with fever and muscle aches before the race but, according to other athletes in Ilboru, Malkia had coincidentally had similar ailments before almost all of her races in past months. Malkia was 22, a year older than Niara, and while her despondence suggested she no longer wished to compete in running, Gwandu insisted that she was young enough to continue earning large sums of money from the sport. What Malkia had achieved to date was “just the beginning”, Gwandu argued, because high results in marathons were what produced “real money”. Gwandu felt athletes could only compete well in

marathons as they grew older, meaning Malkia was approaching the most lucrative time in her running career, rather than the age at which to retire.

Malkia's situation highlights that initial differences between her and Gwandu's aspirations, which had been downplayed by the common goal of achieving high race results, re-emerged following her departure from the camp. The overlap between Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's goals and those of the girls was therefore only partial and incomplete. Gwandu and Mama Gwandu nevertheless used Malkia as a model of success for the other girls to emulate, and the girls themselves admired Malkia for the image of an urban woman she embodied. This chapter describes some of the differences I observed between the younger and the older girls training in Team 100. Many of these differences were also perceptible to outsiders of the camp, and I argue that they represent changes the girls go through over time in the camp, as they increasingly perceive themselves as embodying characteristics they admire in Malkia. Using Ferguson, I relate the differences between the girls to the process of learning to master "performative competence" in a cosmopolitan cultural style (Ferguson, 1999: 96), which I argue is enacted partly through particular commodities and forms of consumption.

### **Confidence**

Malkia began producing impressive results in local races shortly after arriving in Arusha in 1998, something Gwandu associates with her discipline and hard working attitude. Given she was the only girl living in the camp at this time, Malkia slept segregated from the boys in the section of the camp reserved for Gwandu, Mama Gwandu and their children (see Figure 16). As boys were gradually replaced by girls, a room in the athletes' section of the camp was converted into a room for girls, into which Malkia settled along with other female athletes. In 2002, Malkia fell pregnant following a relationship she had been having with Kafil, one of the few remaining boys in the camp. Malkia was 17 and had been living in the camp for four years.

When I questioned him about this, Gwandu remained vague about the details surrounding Malkia's relationship with Kafil. Given that Malkia's pregnancy blatantly transgressed the strict restrictions in place in the camp at the time of my visit, which



controlled the girls' interaction with men, Gwandu's vagueness suggests these restrictions were not yet in place in 2002. Malkia's pregnancy highlights Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's inexperience with training girls and provides an example of an early mistake they made in this regard. This idea also helps to explain their unwillingness to discuss the matter with me and the difficulties I experienced attempting to obtain information on the circumstances surrounding Malkia and Kafil's relationship. It is possible that, given male athletes' higher earnings, Malkia was attracted to Kafil for the financial support he could potentially provide her to settle in Arusha permanently.



**Figure 16:** Gwandu and Mama Gwandu standing outside their living quarters in the camp.  
(Source: author's collection)

When this topic was raised in our discussions, Gwandu always strongly emphasised Malkia's hard work and impressive results in these early days. This suggests that, by 2002, she had produced results high enough to inspire Gwandu and Mama Gwandu to allow her to remain with Team 100. Malkia's son – whom she named Goodluck – was moved to live with Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's children in the camp, and Kafil was expelled from Team 100. In 2005, Malkia finished in 6<sup>th</sup> place in the 5000 meter event at the Helsinki IAAF World Track Championships, and earned approximately US \$30 000. According to Gwandu, a small portion of this money was given to Malkia's father to help her family in Kinyetto, and Gwandu encouraged Malkia to build a house in Ilboru and save the remainder of what she had earned. Once her house was built, Malkia moved into it with Kafil – whom she married – and Goodluck, and this is

where they lived at the time of my visit, along with three other female athletes Gwandu also coached, for whom there was insufficient room in Team 100.

Malkia continued to train with the girls living in the camp and, because of the high results she had achieved, Gwandu regularly emphasised her links with Team 100. Gwandu described Malkia as “one of us”, highlighting the fact that she housed other Team 100 athletes to suggest her house was like an extension of the camp. Gwandu treated Malkia differently to the other girls he trained, however, and despite her frequent interaction with the other girls, a number of characteristics noticeably differentiated Malkia from them. One of the most striking of these was her confidence. While Malkia was confident and outspoken, even in front of male athletes and athletes older and more experienced than her, the girls living in the camp were shy and seldom spoke in public. The girls’ behaviour was noticed by a number of camp outsiders, including other male athletes living in Ilboru, who commented they found the girls awkward and “strange”. Their shyness bordered on rudeness, according to these boys, who did not understand why the girls were apparently unwilling to engage in conversation with them.

Although the girls lacked confidence in most social situations outside of the camp, these boys’ comments highlight that the restrictions Gwandu placed on their interaction with men made them particularly awkward and shy in the presence of males. I observed marked differences in the girls’ behaviour around men and women not just in public, but also in a number of everyday situations within the camp. Gwandu regularly invited other male coaches and friends to spend the afternoon with him in the camp, during which time the girls seldom came out of their rooms in an effort to avoid interacting with the men. Girls who did leave their rooms rarely spoke, including when they were directly spoken to or asked a question, and commonly walked with their heads bowed to avoid making eye contact with anyone. This sharply contrasted with the gossiping and joking the girls engaged in with female friends. Mama Gwandu occasionally invited to the camp.

One male athlete named Samson, who lived with his brother in Ilboru, attributed the girls’ shyness to the fact they were “village girls” who had not yet learnt the ways of the city. Samson argued that Malkia was more confident because she was a “city girl”.

Hearing Samson describe Malkia as more confident than the other girls, Gwandu laughed that when she had first arrived in Arusha, Malkia had been shyer than any of the athletes currently living in the camp. “You will see,” Gwandu told me, “these girls, too, will be confident like Malkia with time”, and he pointed out that Niara was more confident than the younger girls to support this idea. Samson’s comments suggest Malkia’s confidence was related to the “stylistic competence” she had mastered in performing a cosmopolitan cultural style (Ferguson, 1999: 100), while the other girls were shy because they lacked her performative competence. Gwandu and Mama Gwandu, by contrast, attributed the girls’ shyness to their age, saying that their confidence increased, as they got older. Given all the girls living in Team 100 had been recruited once they had reached the end of primary school, at around 13 or 14 years old, their age and the amount of time they had been living in the city were in fact closely related. The three youngest and shyest athletes had all been living in the camp for less than a year.

In associating confidence with adulthood, Gwandu and Mama Gwandu perceived the girls’ awkward shyness as a childish characteristic for which they needed encouragement to grow out of. Gwandu’s main strategy for building the girls’ confidence involved teasing them and putting them in situations in which they were required to defend themselves in public. The two main topics of Gwandu’s teasing were the girls’ servitude and their involvement in religious activity. He frequently sent girls on errands, subsequently taunting them for being “very accommodating” and for making a “very good maid”. Likewise, he often teased girls such as Halima and Nasra because they were Muslim and did not attend church with Mama Gwandu.

Gwandu also frequently teased Maria because she was Catholic and wore rosary beads around her neck. Gwandu told me these rosary beads were an example of “too much” religion. As well as building the girls’ confidence, Gwandu’s teasing thus also functioned as a means of controlling what he perceived to be unreasonable or irrational religious beliefs, or faiths such as Islam, which he compared to the “local beliefs” he disapproved of. Similarly, while teasing the girls’ about their servitude reaffirmed Gwandu’s authority over them, it also enabled him to control their transition into adulthood by placing them in a position of servitude that was associated with childhood. Although teasing encouraged the youngest and shyest girls to grow

into confident adult women, sending them on mundane errands normally reserved for children emphasised their role as such. Gwandu never teased older girls like Niara because they were confident enough to defend themselves from his taunts. Conceiving of the more confident girls as being closer to adulthood, Gwandu did not send them on childish errands either.



**Figure 17:** Malkia wearing one of the many gowns she owned.  
(Source: author's collection)

### **Hair and Clothing**

Malkia was another athlete Gwandu never teased or attempted to humiliate in public, because her confidence, the fact that she was married, had a child and did not live in the camp anymore all gave her the status of adult woman. While her confidence was the most noticeable character trait that differentiated Malkia from the other Team 100 athletes, particularly the younger girls, her hairstyles and clothing were the most visible physical signs of difference between them. Malkia's hairstyles and clothing

also highlighted differences between the girls' and her patterns of consumption. Malkia owned a large quantity of long, sophisticated dresses, many of which she had had tailor-made based on her own designs (see Figure 17). Her dresses were striking and unique, reflecting Malkia's confidence and self-assuredness, and I seldom noticed Malkia wearing the same dress twice throughout the entire period of my fieldwork.

By contrast, the girls living in the camp possessed only a small amount of plain and practical clothing. Outside of training the girls wore long skirts and practical t-shirts, all of which had been purchased by Mama Gwandu for the girls to share amongst themselves. These everyday work clothes were owned communally so that no item of clothing belonged to a particular girl, but the girls did own one outfit each individually, which Mama Gwandu had also purchased for them and which they wore only for church on Sundays. None of the girls living in the camp ever wore trousers except of the tracksuit pants they wore in training. Although pants were an uncommon choice among women in Arusha in general, they appeared to be a trendy choice I occasionally noticed young women wearing in the centre of town, but seldom in Ilboru. Long dresses, skirts and colourful *kanga*<sup>41</sup> were the most commonly worn attire by women of all ages in Arusha (see Figure 18) and, although neither the girls' skirts nor Malkia's dresses were unusual in this regard, Team 100 athletes were nevertheless distinguishable from other women in Ilboru by their clothing.

While Malkia's dresses were striking for their uniqueness and sophistication, the girls' long, practical work skirts were striking for their plainness and dull lack of colour. The quantity and quality of the dresses Malkia owned attested to the large sum of money she had earned through running, whereas the girls' modest attire reflected Gwandu's desire for them to live simply, enacting the localist style he perceived as characteristic of village life, and without luxuries and extravagant expenses (Ferguson, 1999: 86). In differentiating them from other women, the girls' plain clothing also highlighted their liminal status and the fact that they were in an ambiguous process of transition. Gwandu further emphasised this by arguing that, if the girls had them, they could use "fancy clothes" to attract men, and that buying such

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<sup>41</sup> Bright, colourfully printed cloth commonly worn by women in Tanzania. *Kanga* are often worn as a pair, layered over skirts or pants, or worn over shoulders or used as a head covering. *Kanga* are also used for sleeping in and for carrying babies.

clothing for the girls would therefore encourage the type of behaviour he strove to prevent.



**Figure 18:** A young girl carrying an infant in a *kanga*.  
The brightly printed, colorful patterns of this girls' outfit were typical of everyday work outfits commonly worn by women in Ilboru.  
(Source: author's collection)

Although Gwandu was intransigent in his opinion of the girls wearing “fancy clothes”, I noticed Niara, Evelyn and Getrude – the three oldest of the six Team 100 girls selected for the 2007 World Cross-Country Championships in Mombassa – all obtained new dresses shortly before the trip. The girls did not have money of their own to have made such purchases and Gwandu, infuriated by the situation, told me he did not understand how the girls had obtained the gowns. While I waited with the girls for the bus that was to take them to Mombassa, I noticed Mama Gwandu discreetly handing Niara a package containing a new pair of shoes. When I spoke to Mama Gwandu about this later she explained that, although she had not purchased the dresses for the girls, she had bought the shoes because she argued that looking “beautiful” would help the girls “feel good” and race well.



The fact that Mama Gwandu purchased shoes for Niara and condoned only the three oldest girls looking “beautiful” suggests she perceived this as another means of differentiating the girls according to their age and how close they were to becoming adult women. Mama Gwandu’s comment also highlights the strong relationship she perceived to exist between becoming an athlete and becoming an adult woman. While the dresses disguised the girls’ liminal status between childhood and adulthood by enabling them to imitate the cosmopolitan style they admired in Malkia, Mama Gwandu’s comment that this would positively affect the girls’ racing suggests she felt this would simultaneously disguise their liminal status as athletes, and build their confidence before the race. The girls themselves did not wish to discuss the purchasing of the dresses with me, but it is possible Malkia shared Mama Gwandu’s views on this matter, and had been the one to purchase the dresses for the girls.



**Figure 19:** Evelyn (left) and Niara (right) with their new dresses for Mombassa.  
(Source: author’s collection)

Like her dresses, Malkia's hair was another striking feature of her appearance, through which she expressed her confidence and cosmopolitan style, and which distinguished her both from other Team 100 athletes and other women in Ilboru. While many Ilboru women wore their hair in practical short styles and almost always covered their heads with *kanga* or headscarves, I observed young women in town wearing a prolific array of intricate hairstyles, whose conspicuousness made this an effective medium to convey individuality, creativity, status and wealth. Nicky, my research assistant, frequently changed the way she wore her hair, most often alternating between long, straight braids adorned with coloured beads, and a short 'bob' style in which her hair was relaxed, straightened and oiled smooth.

The girls in the camp described Nicky's hairstyles as "trendy" and compared her 'bob' style to my hair, because it was straight "like *mzungu* hair". Malkia, by contrast, always wore her hair in cornrows<sup>42</sup>, and diversified this style by using a variety of different synthetic hair extensions. While Nicky's numerous long braids were thin and hung down freely, Malkia's cornrows were created from larger sections of hair and sat tightly against her scalp. Although both girls extended the length of their hair with synthetic extensions, Nicky's braids were always matt and black whereas Malkia's braids were glossy and loosely curled. The large sections of hair used for Malkia's cornrows also created a look that was soft and glamorous, which she reinforced with her sophisticated dresses. Malkia's choice to avoid styling her hair in *mzungu* straight styles highlights Ferguson's point that cosmopolitan cultural styles are not always necessarily derived from 'European' or 'Western' styles because, as Malkia noted as I admired her hair one day, braids and cornrows were specific styles *mzungu* hair could not hold (Ferguson, 1999: 108).

In striking contrast to Malkia, Nicky and other women in Ilboru, all the girls living in the camp wore their hair shaved very short and their heads uncovered. Shaving their hair was something Gwandu insisted they do immediately upon arriving in the camp because, he argued, longer hair was difficult and expensive to maintain, and another unnecessary luxury the girls did not need. The shortness of the girls' hair emphasised

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<sup>42</sup> Cornrows are tight, underhand braids that sit very close to the scalp, forming a continuous raised row resembling rows in a cornfield.



Gwandu's frugality because, in his own words, "the shorter it is shaved, the longer they can last before the next haircut". Accordingly, the intricate styles Nicky and Malkia frequently maintained in their own hair also expressed the idea that they were wealthy, and could afford to do so. The Team 100 girls' almost baldness provided another visual clue as to their liminal status and the fact that they lived in the camp.



**Figure 20:** Evelyn (left) and Niara (middle) with their new hairstyles. The girls are being awarded second and first prize respectively, at the Tanzania National track competition held in July 2008. (Source: Gwandu's collection)

Although all the athletes living in Team 100 wore their hair shaved short during the entire time of my fieldwork, Gwandu sent me more recent photos of the girls after I had left Tanzania. These photos suggest that, like clothing, hairstyles had become another means of differentiating the younger girls from the older ones who were closer to becoming adult women, and mastering the cosmopolitan style they admired in Malkia. Figure 19 shows a photo of Niara being congratulated for winning first place in the Tanzanian National Track competition in July of 2008. In second place and to Niara's right is Evelyn, the second-oldest girl in the camp and one of the other athletes involved in the incident with the dresses before the 2007 World Cross-Country Championships. While other photos of this event sent by Gwandu show all other Team 100 girls to have their customary short, shaved hair, this picture shows

Niara and Evelyn wearing their hair in cornrows similar to those worn by Malkia at the time of my fieldwork.

### **‘Legal’ Names**

While confidence, hair and clothing were traits that visibly differentiated Malkia from the other athletes and the girls amongst themselves, their names were a more subtle marker of differences between them. Gwandu explained that infants in Tanzania were given a name at birth, considered their ‘official’ name, but that they were subsequently also given a nickname related to individual personality traits or to events surrounding their birth or their mother’s pregnancy. Gwandu referred to these nicknames as ‘home names’, and illustrated the process of giving a child a home name with the example of one of his sons, whom he called *Zawadi*<sup>43</sup> because he had had a difficult birth. While home names were predominantly used by family inside the home, official birth names were more commonly used by strangers or in public situations. Differentiating individuals with the same official name was done by referring to them by their father’s name, making this a third name children could be associated with from birth.

Gwandu also explained that people often chose a new name as they got older, which he referred to as their ‘Christian name’. Christian names often sounded like *mzungu* or ‘Western’ names, according to Gwandu, and many people who migrated from rural areas to urban centres took on a Christian name as they did so to separate themselves from their rural ties. Individuals were able to change their names as they pleased in this way – particularly those born in rural areas – because no legal records were kept of rural births and of the official names children were given at birth, or of any subsequent name changes they made throughout their lives.

In the camp, the younger girls were all interchangeably referred to by either their official birth names or by their home names, except for Halima, whom Gwandu occasionally referred to as Msandai to indicate and emphasise a personal connection he had with her father. Girls called by their home or official names included Nasra, Reheema and Neema. By contrast, older girls such as Evelyn, Getrude and Emily

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<sup>43</sup> The Swahili word for gift

were most often called by the Christian names they had chosen for themselves after having lived in Arusha for some time. Mama Gwandu indicated that the church encouraged the girls to adopt Christian names, and that, in doing so, they expressed their adherence to Christian values as well as their desire to separate themselves from things reminding them of their rural origins. Once girls had chosen a Christian name they were seldom referred to in any other way. Whether a girl had adopted a new ‘city’ name or whether she was still called by a name associated with her life in the village thus provided additional clues as to the length of time she had spent in Arusha and her status within the camp.

The exceptions to this were the names Niara and Malkia. Both of these were the girls’ official birth names, but they had been reinvested with new meaning once the girls had achieved high enough results in races for them to compete in events outside of East Africa, for which they required a passport. The fact that none of the girls had birth records made it difficult to determine their exact time and place of birth, and Gwandu described the process of determining these details for Niara and Malkia as having been complicated and lengthy. Gwandu worried at the possibility of the dates of birth recorded in both girls’ passports being inaccurate, given they were based on their parents’ estimates, and, in an attempt to “do things properly”, he had insisted that both girls record their official birth names in their passports.

As well as enabling the girls to travel, owning a passport also marked the first time in a girl’s life that personal details about her were formalised and legally recorded. The permanence suggested in having these ‘legal’ names formalised and printed in their passports was reflected in the fact that this became the names by which they were always referred. Although ‘Niara’ was more closely associated with village life than ‘Priscilla’ – the Christian name she had chosen – ‘Niara’ was thus associated with her high athletic achievement and approaching transition into adulthood and, after having obtained her passport, she was no longer referred to as Priscilla.

In choosing by which name to call a girl, Gwandu exerted a similar control over their transition into adulthood as he did through teasing them about their servitude. This function of the girls’ names was particularly evident in his relationship with Malkia, whom he was unable to control because she was married, and the rights to her labour

belonged to Kafil. Gwandu argued Malkia spent too much money on expenses such as her hair and clothing, which he described as “silly” spending on luxurious extravagances. Although he was powerless to stop her, Gwandu feared Malkia was being driven crazy by her money, and that this was part of the reason she was becoming lazy and losing motivation to continue training for marathons. Gwandu did not consider Malkia’s running career to be complete in this regard, which created a tension between his idea that a successful running career preceded the transition into adult womanhood and the fact that Malkia was already married and had a child – two important markers of adult womanhood.

This tension was suggested in the fact that Gwandu did not call Malkia by the title of ‘Mama’, which he described as the proper marker of respect to use when addressing any adult woman who had borne a child. Calling Malkia by the title of ‘Mama’ would imply that she was “up here” as a woman, Gwandu explained, gesturing a level in the air in front of him, which was inappropriate because he thought of her as being “still somewhere down here”, gesturing to a level slightly below the first one. Although Gwandu manifested his respect for Malkia’s athletic achievements to date by his eagerness to continue associating her with Team 100, his disapproval of her unwillingness to continue running influenced his opinion of her as an adult woman. This emphasises the idea that the overlap between the girls’ aspirations and those of Gwandu and Mama Gwandu was only partial and temporary. While Malkia had achieved her goal of becoming an urban adult woman, in Gwandu’s eyes the goal of improving her life through running was only partially complete. Tensions similar to those emerging between Gwandu and the younger girls at the beginning of their time with Team 100 were re-emerging with Malkia after she had left the camp.

### **Conflicting Aspirations**

The tension between Malkia’s vision and that of Gwandu and Mama Gwandu was also suggested by their dislike for Malkia’s husband Kafil. Kafil was the reason for Malkia’s loss of motivation for running because he distracted her from running, according to Mama Gwandu, and Gwandu argued that Kafil strongly influenced her money-spending habits, which he perceived to be excessive. By arguing that Kafil was to blame for Malkia’s lack of motivation to train for marathons, Mama Gwandu

implied that Malkia's running career suffered because her interaction with men was not restricted in the way that it was in the camp. Similarly, Gwandu's insinuation that Malkia was being driven crazy by money suggests he perceived her lack of motivation as stemming from the fact that he could no longer 'protect' her from going crazy by controlling her labour and her income.

Gwandu's waning influence over the way Malkia spent her money was discernable in the fact that, in short space of time between her high result in the 2005 IAAF World Track Championships and her marriage to Kafil, he had been able to convince her to build her house in Ilboru. In the two years between then and my visit to the camp in 2007, however, Gwandu's only influence had been to prevent Malkia's money from being used to buy a car. Gwandu's attempts to influence the spending of Malkia's money were a frequent source of conflict between himself and Kafil, whose control over Malkia's income was manifested by the fact that, other than the relatively small amount of money she spent on dresses, none of Malkia's money had been spent on items she had chosen to purchase. A large portion of the remaining money Malkia had earned had gone towards the purchase of a large motorbike for Kafil, which he was unable to ride because Ilboru's dirt roads were too deeply rutted.

Gwandu argued that, while her money was now gradually driving her crazy, Malkia's house and the fact Kafil had as yet been prevented from buying a car, demonstrated that Malkia had benefited from Gwandu's guidance and teaching about frugal living during her time in the camp. Malkia's reasons for building a house differed from Gwandu's, however, because for her, building a house was critical to establishing herself permanently in the city, and had been one of the main ways she had hoped to spend potential race earnings since she had arrived in Arusha. Drawing on her research on Kenyan women aspiring to migrate to the urban centre of Nairobi, Bujra argues that a similar desire to build a house in the city frames women's aspirations for establishing urban permanence and an urban identity (2005: 127). Since having achieved the goal of building a house, Malkia did not perceive of herself as having had any control over the way in which her money was spent and, unlike Gwandu, she therefore did not feel as though she had had any influence over whether or not Kafil had purchased a car.

Malkia expressed the extent to which she perceived of herself as powerless to control her money by arguing that she was unable to make plans for her future because the money she earned was not hers to make future plans with. Frustrated at my question about what she aspired towards now that she had achieved the goal of settling in Arusha, Malkia explained:

*“In our culture women do not think like this... we do not make plans like this.... If I decide that in five years I want to do something or be somewhere... like maybe I want to go back to school... and I work towards this, my husband can come anytime and change this plan... decide that this will not happen. What is the point of thinking ahead when everything can be changed?”*

Malkia’s frustration highlights the tactlessness of my question, which, like Karl’s description of having had to lower his expectations for the girls, belittled the goals Malkia had achieved since 2005 by implying she contented herself with too little. Malkia’s reaction also highlights the significance of her dresses and hairstyles in shaping her identity and defining her as a successful, wealthy, urban adult woman. Malkia’s use of clothing and hairstyles to distinguish herself from the other Team 100 girls and from other women in Arusha, attested to her ability to negotiate the cosmopolitan style she had aspired towards. Malkia’s stylistic competence in this cosmopolitan style was, in the words of Ferguson (1999: 100), “a practical, empowering asset... achieved at some cost over a long period of time”.

The constraints Malkia perceived as limiting her ability to control her own income, and Gwandu’s numerous examples of athletes who had rapidly lost all their race earnings through being driven crazy, are both examples of some of the confounding factors that complicated the girls’ aspirations to settle permanently in the city. These factors also emphasise the instability and fragility of the urban identity the girls aspired to construct for themselves, and the fact that identity construction is “always a compromise, always pragmatic, always in flux and never pure” (Cook & Crang, 2007). Malkia’s continued ability to enact her cosmopolitan style and to define herself in terms of her aspirations is thus, in itself, a commendable feat.

While Malkia’s ability to differentiate herself from the other Team 100 athletes emphasises the girls’ liminal status in the camp, the fact that the same markers also

differentiated the girls from each other highlights the processual nature of their transition phase. Stylistic competence in the cosmopolitan style the girls aspired to acquire was acquired over “a long period of time” (Ferguson, 1999: 100), as were the high results in races Gwandu aspired the girls to attain. The fact that Niara and some of the older girls were beginning to acquire markers of cosmopolitanism in their growing confidence, dresses, hairstyles and the names by which they were referred, indicates that the transition was gradual, and related to running progress and results achieved. Although Mama Gwandu’s role of preparing the girls for adulthood focussed predominantly on ensuring that they learnt the morals and principles taught by the church, her act of purchasing new shoes for Niara before Mombassa suggests she recognised the significance of shoes to the girls’ enactment of cosmopolitanism, and was sympathetic to their aspiration of becoming urban adult women.

## Chapter 6:

# Conclusion

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Discussing the different aspirations held by those involved in the Team 100 camp highlights the multiple ways in which ‘modernity’ can be understood and enacted. Beginning with Karl’s goal of enabling the athletes training with Team 100 to obtain athletic scholarships to American universities, this thesis has traced the ways Gwandu and Mama Gwandu interpret his ideas and incorporate these with their own, which the girls then understand and respond to in various ways. In each instance, running is conceived of as a means of attaining specific goals, creating a link and partial overlap between these aspirations. The linkages between ambitions held by Karl, Gwandu and Mama Gwandu, and the girls are always incomplete, and the pragmatic constraints of everyday life mean each ideal remains unattainable and forever out of reach. Ideas and aspirations thus continually change, as they are readjusted and reinterpreted to fit changing constraints and perceptions of what is possible and attainable.

Gwandu and Mama Gwandu’s backgrounds were briefly described in chapter one, from their respective upbringings in rural areas of Tanzania through to their running careers and the founding of the Team 100 camp. The camp was described in contrast to the only other athletic training camp in Arusha, the Tanzania Sports Academy, and Gwandu and Mama Gwandu’s dislike of Max Iraghe was shown to mirror fears Snyder (2005:10) identifies as commonly held among Tanzanians about ‘Western modernity’ and the idea of becoming “like Kenya”. The scope of the thesis was discussed in terms of its location within anthropological debates on ‘modernity’, and the idea of ‘multiple modernities’ was suggested as a useful framework for understanding the differences between Gwandu and Mama Gwandu’s goals for Team 100, and those of Karl, identified in the preface. Ferguson’s seminal ethnography of the Zambian Copperbelt (1999) was highlighted as a key work used to frame the ideas discussed in the remainder of the thesis, most particularly his understanding of modernity as enacted through cosmopolitan and localist cultural styles.



Prominent themes in contemporary Africanist debates on modernity were identified, including a dichotomy between rural and urban spaces, and perceived differences in community structures, relationships and modes of production and consumption associated with this dichotomy. Chapter two provided a background to Tanzania's current position in international athletics compared with nearby countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia, widely renowned as dominant forces in the world of middle and long distance running today. Tanzania's current low standing in international running results relative to the rest of East Africa was described, to provide a background to the context in which Team 100 operates.

Historical and political differences between Tanzania and Kenya were used to help explain the neighbouring countries' starkly different performances in international athletics. Included in this discussion was an overview of the emergence and development of running in East Africa as a whole, and of the impact of Kenyan and Tanzanian independence on the growth of the sport in these two countries. Nyerere and Kenyatta's presidencies were compared in terms of their contrasting policies, and opinions on ideas of the 'West' and of 'Western modernity'. A brief overview was given of Nyerere's ideas on modernisation and development, particularly his influential use of the Swahili terms *maendeleo* and *ujamaa*. The idea of *maendeleo* was argued to be critical to understanding the ideas shaping Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's management of the Team 100 camp, particularly their rejection of American university education and their comparing of the camp to a family.

Using Snyder (2005), Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's internalisation of the concept of *maendeleo* was discussed as common among Tanzanians, among whom the negative effects of *ujamaa* are ambivalently viewed and nevertheless perceived to have given rise to positive characteristics that are uniquely Tanzanian. The widespread internalisation of the idea of *maendeleo* was discussed as having extended the meaning of the term beyond that invested in it by Nyerere, leading to multiple interpretations and enactments of *maendeleo* by individuals throughout Tanzania.

This idea was returned to in chapter three, as Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's roles in the camp were compared to those of the girls' parents. Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's goals for the girls were described as revolving around ideas of improving the girls'

lives by enabling them to earn money from running. The idea of earning money autonomously and separating oneself from village ties was also discussed as significant, and as being facilitated by the inevitable migration to Arusha pursuing a running career entailed.

My intrigue as to why Team 100 had changed from a camp for Iraqw males to one for Nyaturu females was explained by Gwandu and Mama Gwandu as revolving around ideas of the Nyaturu as being those in most need of help to improve their lives. This idea was shown to be based on stereotypes – backed by statistics – of the Nyaturu as one of the most isolated, poorest and least educated ethnic groups in Tanzania. These stereotypes were also backed by my own difficulties in finding an English-Nyaturu speaking assistant in Arusha, suggesting that both secondary school education and migration to urban centres is uncommon among the Nyaturu.

Related to the rarity of gaining secondary education in rural Singida, the time at the end of primary school at which girls were recruited for Team 100 was suggested as being a critical point in their lives. As one of the only ethnographies of the Nyaturu, Schneider's work (1970) was used to argue that training unmarried women was less problematic for Gwandu than was training male athletes. While emphasising the significance of Gwandu's role as the girls' 'father', Schneider's concept of "people as wealth" (1970: 104) provided an alternative perspective on the question of why Gwandu and Mama Gwandu shifted from training males to training female athletes. The idea of natural running talent was then introduced as a concept that differentiated Gwandu from other Iraqw coaches in Arusha as, based on his belief that ethnicity was "hamna" in Tanzania, Gwandu argued that the Nyaturu could also possess a natural talent for running.

The discussion on natural talent led into a description of how recruitment for Team 100 occurred, and of Gwandu's relationship with *Mwalimu* Jambau and *Mwalimu* Massong in rural Singida. In chapter four, the girls' ambitions were described as revolving around ideas of becoming adult women and settling permanently in Arusha. Achieving high results in races was discussed as secondary to this goal, particularly if alternative means of making money or settling in the city were available. Engaging in illegitimate relationships outside of marriage was used as an example to illustrate one

such alternative means that has been observed in newly urbanised females in other parts of Africa.

Gwandu's idea of "corruption" was described as stemming from the ambiguity of the long training process as well as from factors he thought of as related to "city life". Gwandu attempted to control these ambiguities by enforcing taboos and restrictions on the girls in the camp. Gwandu's food restrictions sharply contrasted with the importance of gaining weight during house *Imaa*, and this was discussed as one of the main points of conflict between Gwandu and the girls' parents. Related to the girls' weight were ambiguities surrounding their sexuality, which was a second main source of conflict between the girls' parents and Gwandu. The girls' sexuality was also the second main source of corruption Gwandu feared, which he attempted to control by enforcing taboos on the girls' interaction with men similar to those enforced during house *Imaa*.

The girls were shown to resist Gwandu's restrictions in various ways. Niara was shown to be the thinnest and most athletic-looking athlete in the camp, which Gwandu attributed to the length of time she had been training compared to the other girls. Niara herself suggested this was something she worked towards and aspired to achieve, however, suggesting that her thinness was due to the fact she resisted Gwandu the least of any other girl. This was argued to demonstrate a brief period in which Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's aspirations partially overlapped with those of the girls, insofar as they all conceived of achieving high running results as critical to ending the liminal transition period that was life in the camp.

In chapter five, the processual nature of the transition through life in the camp was highlighted by emphasising differences between the girls that suggested the different stages of transition they were in. The girls were described as aspiring to emulate the cosmopolitan cultural style enacted by Malkia, while Mama Gwandu and Gwandu were described as using Malkia as a model of success for the girls' athletic careers. The tensions present in the beginning of the girls' lives in the camp were argued to have re-emerged between Gwandu and Malkia once she had left the camp. These tensions were again related to the idea of a clash between Gwandu and Mama Gwandu's ambitions for the girls and the ambitions they held for themselves.

A number of factors discussed throughout this thesis have pointed to inconsistencies in the cosmopolitan style towards which the girls aspire, emphasising the fact that cultural styles are subjective (Ferguson, 1999: 101). Girls whom Gwandu had had to expel from the camp because they had gained excessive weight and had been ‘corrupted’ by food, for example, highlight the subjective nature of Niara’s claim that being thin was attractive and that “men like this now”. Although Niara associated thinness with cosmopolitanism, not all women in Ilboru or Arusha were thin and, likewise, not all women performed cosmopolitan style by wearing their hair in elegant cornrows similar to those worn by Malkia – as Nicky’s alternating between braids and a ‘bob’ illustrates.

Similarly, the localist style Gwandu and Mama Gwandu attempted to enforce in the camp was subjective and a style they imagined as representative of “village life”. Upon visiting Malkia’s family in Kinyetto village, I noticed that her sisters appeared to share Malkia’s fondness for wearing long, elegant gowns and for wearing their hair in cornrows – two traits Gwandu pointed out in Malkia as examples of money spent on luxuries, which, he argued, contradicted the simplicity of life in rural areas. The fact that Gwandu and Mama Gwandu’s simulation of “village life” revolved predominantly around ideas of living modestly and of avoiding spending money on luxuries, also relates Gwandu’s fear of athletes being driven crazy by money to urban, rather than rural, patterns of consumption.

As a result of the unexpected situation I found myself in upon arriving in the Team 100 camp, and the relationship that subsequently evolved between Gwandu and I, my focus shifted away from the question of how, exactly, the sport of running was perceived to empower Tanzanian girls. Instead, I attempted to understand things such as why Gwandu appeared to downplay the importance of education, and why Team 100 had shifted from training Iraqw males to training Nyaturu females. In doing so, I found that I was in fact also answering my original question on running and women’s ‘empowerment’.

In conceiving of the Nyaturu as the most “backward” and disempowered ethnic group in Tanzania, Gwandu and Mama Gwandu constructed the girls’ selection for the camp as empowering because of the opportunities it created for them to improve their lives.

Likewise, after some years in the camp, the older girls began to conceive of the money earned from running as a means of obtaining the commodities and material resources that would help them gain performative competence in the cosmopolitan style towards which they aspired. As Malkia's case illustrates, gaining performative competence took time, and was itself a "practical, empowering asset" (Ferguson, 1999: 100). Gwandu and Mama Gwandu imagined the girls to be empowered by running in mostly abstract terms, in the sense that the improvement they perceived running as bringing to a girl's life was not measurable or well-defined – as illustrated by their argument that Malkia should continue training for marathons despite having already achieved high results internationally and earned money from the sport. For the girls themselves, on the other hand, empowerment was more personal, manifested their everyday lives and experiences.



**Figure 21:** Gwandu and Mama Gwandu with Team 100 athletes at the camp.  
(Source: Gwandu's collection)

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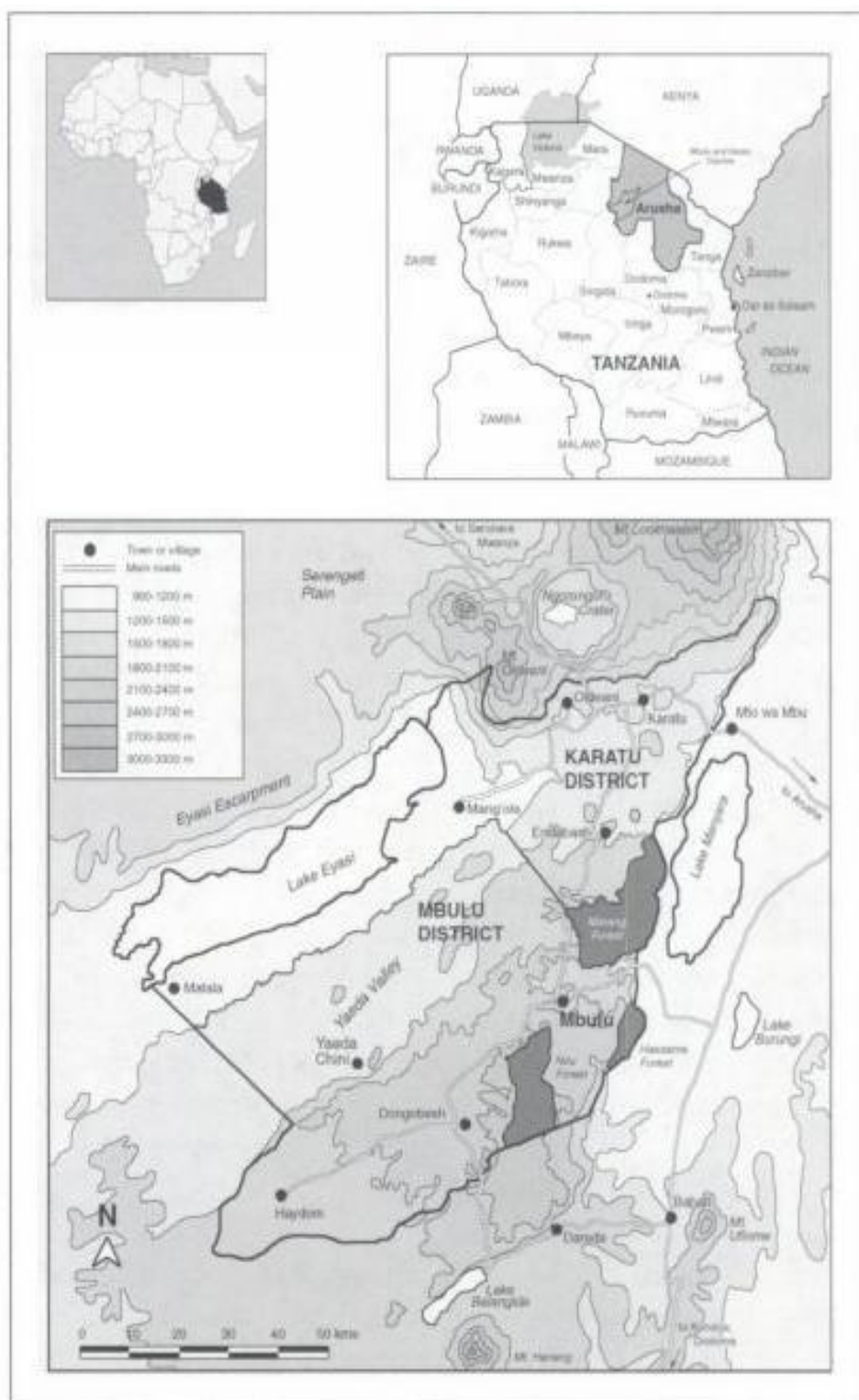
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# Appendix 1

## Map of the Mbulu and Karatu Districts, Arusha Region, Tanzania



Source: Madsen, 2000



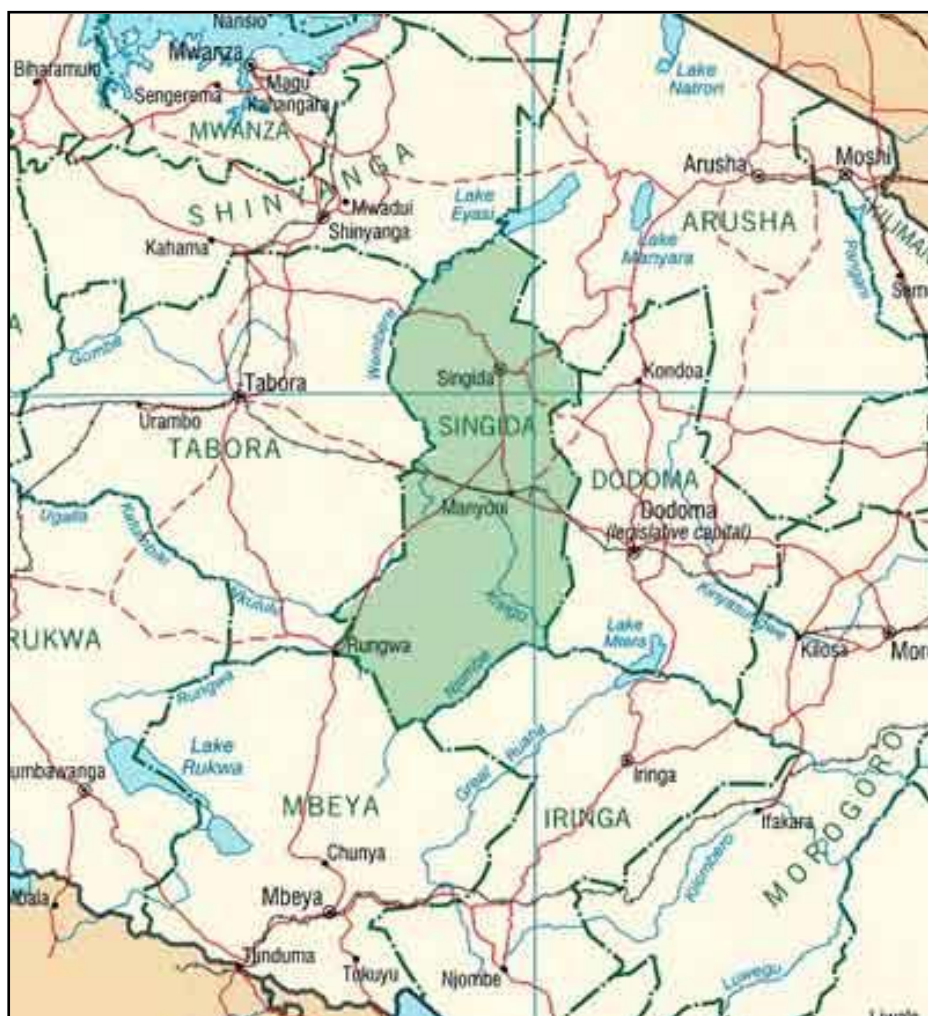
## Appendix 2

**Map Showing Singida Region in Tanzania**



*Source: DigiAtlas, 2008*

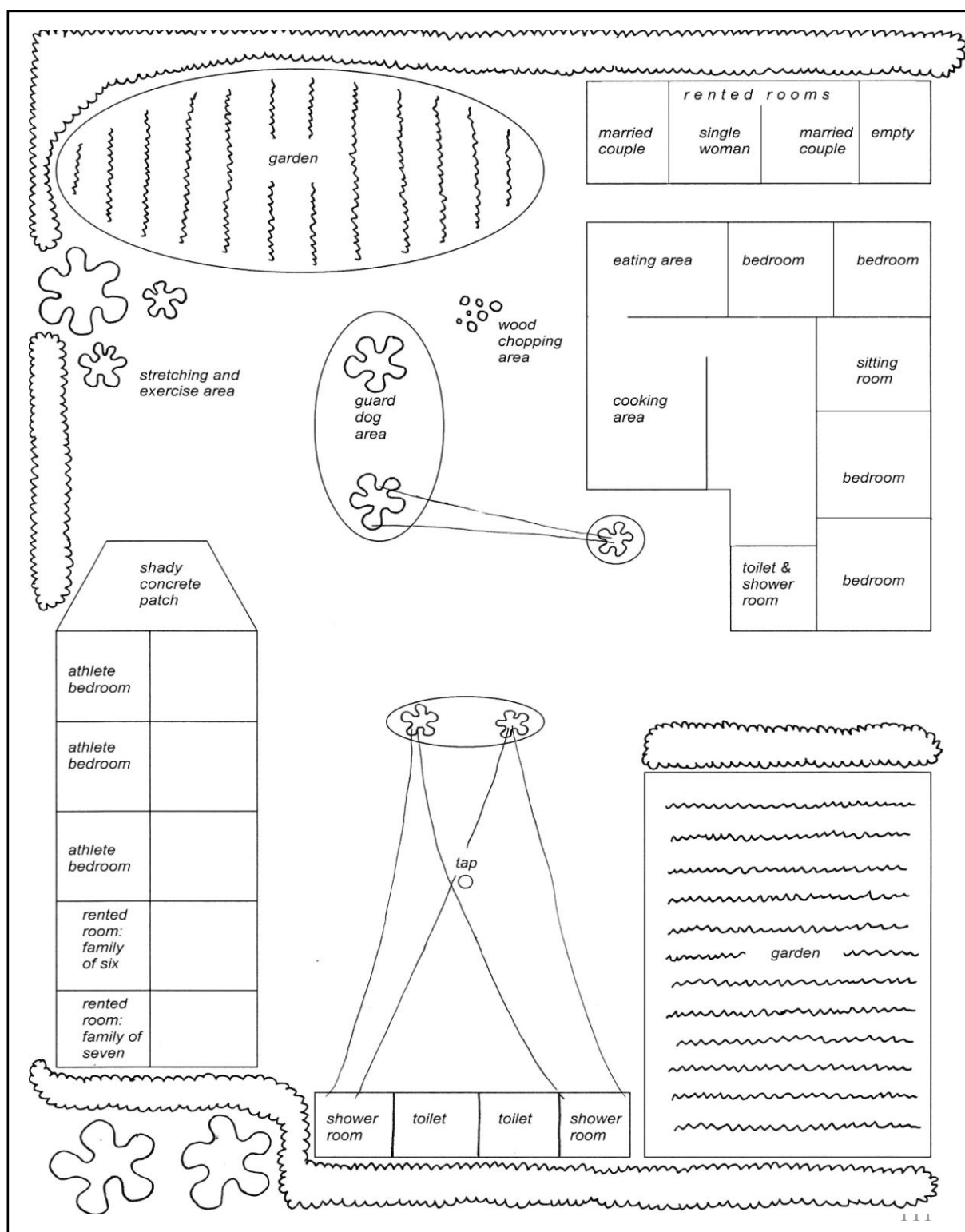
## Map of Singida Region, Tanzania



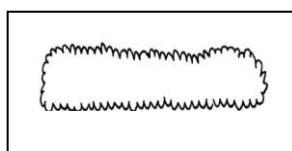
Source: Hauner, 2006

## Appendix 3

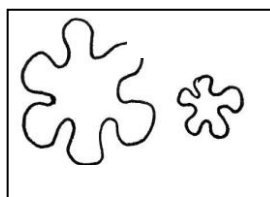
**Diagram Showing Current Layout of Team 100 Camp**



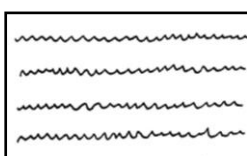
**Key:**



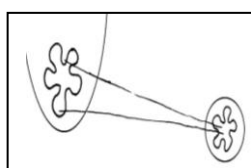
Shrubs demarcating  
camp boundaries



Trees



Cultivated plot growing  
food for athletes



Clotheslines between  
trees



Woodpile

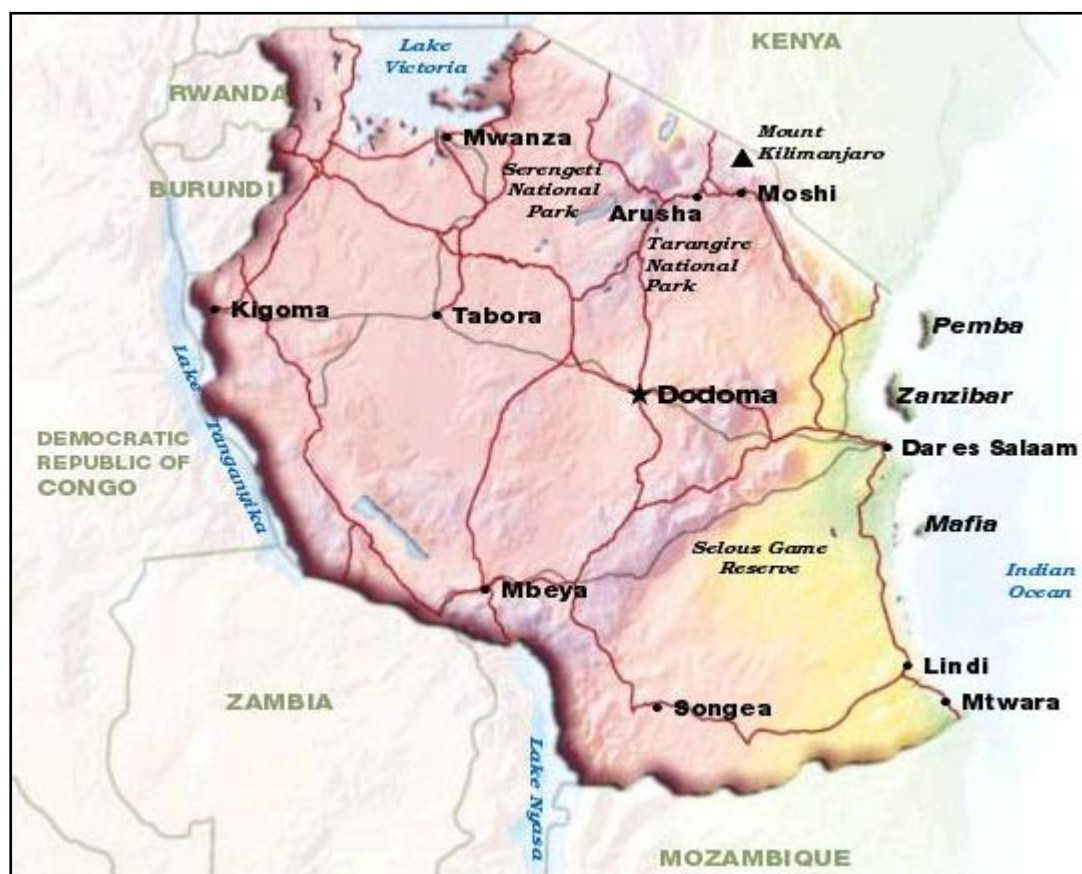
## Appendix 4

**Table of Statistics for Team 100 Athletes**

Name (Alphabetical order)	Date of Birth	Village	Schooling			Arrival in camp	Age (At 9.4.07)
			Primary school	Year finished	Age finished		
Hawa Ally- Ngeni	07.05.93	Lighwa	Ujaire	Sept-05	12	Aug-06	13
Nasra Daniel	24.12.89	Lighwa	Mampando	Sept-05	15	Sept-05	17
Natalya Daniel	07.05.87	Lighwa	Mampando	Sept-03	16	Sept-03	19
Emily Elisante	19.07.88	Bassodawish	Bassodawish	Sept-05	17	Oct-04	18
Maria Hamisi	01.03.91	Kisaki	Kisaki	Sept-05	14	Oct-05	16
Getrude Joseph	03.12.90	Lighwa	Ujaire	Sept-05	15	Oct-05	17
Jumanne- Nkoki	07.11.85	Kisaki	Kisaki	Sep-02	16	Oct-02	21
Witness Micheal	30.03.91	Lighwa	Mampando	Sept-05	14	Oct-05	16
Halima Msandai	26.04.91	Lighwa	Mampando	Sept-05	14	Oct-05	15
Reheema Ramathani	02.12.87	Kisaki	Kisaki	Sept-03	15	Nov-03	19
Phelomena Raymond	01.05.93	Kisaki	Kisaki	Sept-06	13	Sept-06	13
Evelyn Sakilu	28.12.86	Lighwa	Mampando	Sept-03	16	Oct-03	20
Neema Sakilu	26.04.93	Lighwa	Mampando	Sept-05	12	Oct-05	13
Faidha Shabani	29.12.89	Kinyetto	Mtipa	Sept-04	15	Oct-04	17

## Appendix 5

### Map of Tanzania Showing Highways



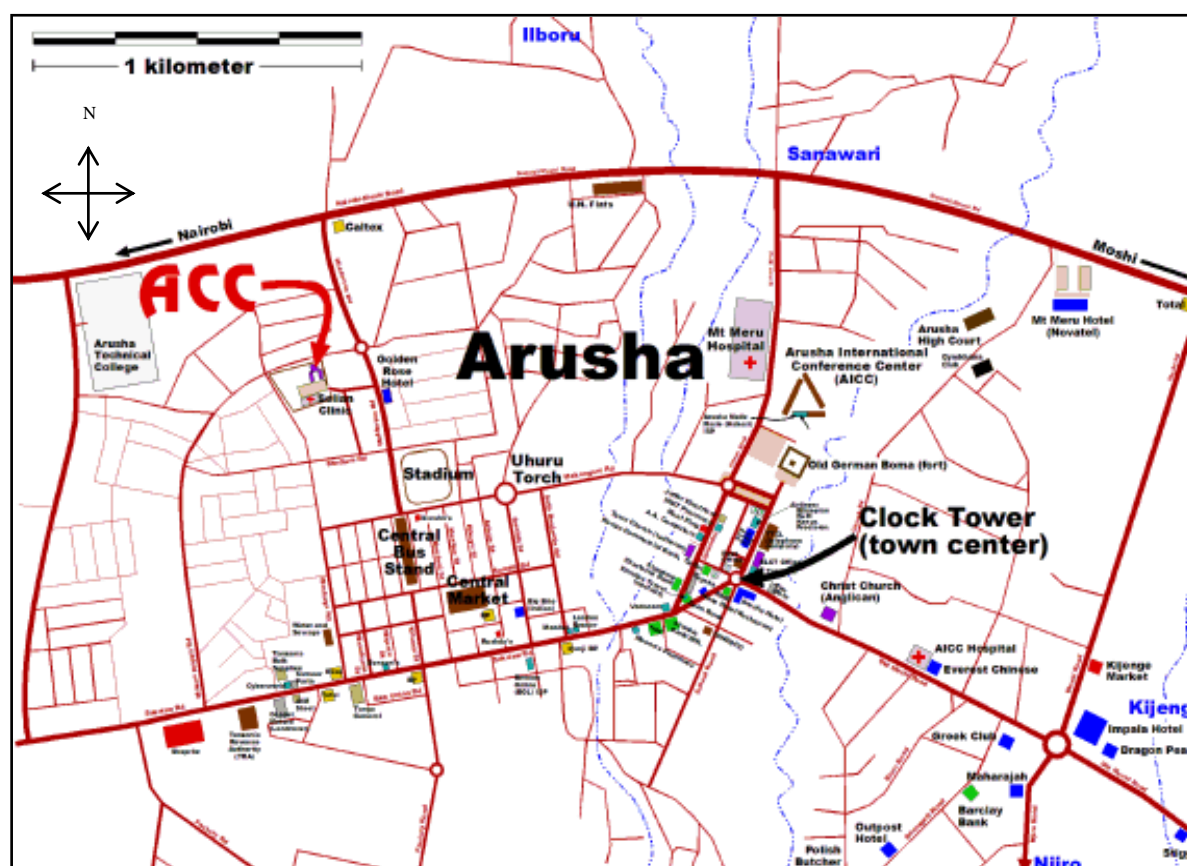
(Source: Washington Post, 2001)

#### Key:

- Sealed highways
- Railways












# Appendix 6

## Map of Arusha



Source: Bangsund, 2005

### Key:

	Automobiles and supplies		Food (grocers, butcher etc)		Petrol station
	Banks		Government, public		Hotel or restaurant
	Building Supplies		Hospitals		Stores, pharmacies etc
	Church, church-related		Parking		